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THE
CANTERBURY TALES
OF
CHAUCER;

COMPLETED IN A MODERN VERSION.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

Chaucer, him who first with harmony inform'd
The language of our fathers,.....His legends blithe
He sang of love or knighthood, or the wiles
Of homely life, through each estate and age
The fashions and the follies of the world
With cunning hand portraying.

AKENSIDE.

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ERRATA.

VOL. III.

- P. 159, l. 8, for *drank* read *drunk*.
282, l. 5, for *strive* read *strife*.
286, l. 3, for *invent* read *invert*.
291, l. 5, for *mingled* read *mangled*.
327, l. 3 from the bottom, in *above* dele *a*, and read
 'bove.
— l. 6 from the bottom, for *as in* read *as is*.
339, l. last, for *love* read *lore*.

CANTERBURY TALES.

PROLOGUE

TO THE

SQUIRE'S TALE.

HEAVEN, says our Host, these cunning shrews
amend,

And from such wives our peaceful days defend !

Not for myself this ardent prayer I pour ;

The gods my doom have seal'd, they can no more ;

I, for my sins, have long been amply curst,

For of all wives mine is, I'm sure, the worst :

Paul's largest bell, though ne'er so stoutly rung,

Is but soft music to her brawling tongue.

If all her vices I should strive to tell,

Or but on half her well-known gifts should dwell,

VOL. III.

B

On

2 PROLOGUE TO THE SQUIRE'S TALE.

On my unfinish'd toil the day would fail,
And my long list would stop each livelier tale.
Pardon my warmth; but when I chance to hear
A wife but nam'd, mine vibrates in my ear;
And though I know complaints and sighs are vain,
And though my tongue I labour to restrain,
Still speak, I find, I must, to ease my pain. }
Pass we the subject now, the gentle Squire
Gladly, I know, will yield to our desire,
And with some feat of arms, or tale of love
The fitness of my choice will clearly prove.

By me, sir Host, blushing the Squire replied,
Request so flattering ne'er may be denied.
Pardon, my friends, if aught I speak amiss :
My will is good, and lo ! my tale is this.

CAMBUSCAN:

OR, THE

SQUIRE'S TALE.

I.

WHERE peopled Scythia's verdant plains extend,
 East in that sea, in whose unfathom'd flood
 Long-winding Volga's rapid streams descend,
 On Oxus' bank an ancient city stood;
 Then Sarra, but to later ages known
 By rising Samarcand's imperial name:
 There held a potent prince his honour'd throne,
 And distant nations own'd Cambuscan's fame:
 So was the Sultan call'd, whose lengthen'd sway
 Surrounding realms revere, and pleas'd his own obey.

II.

When nervous youth had brac'd his valiant breast,
 Oft had the Russian felt his dreadful arm;
 The Persian oft his martial pow'r caress'd,
 And the wild Cossack shrunk at his alarm;

Strict to the law th' Arabian prophet taught,
 Compassionately just, and greatly kind,
 His virtue scarce was shaded with a fault,
 True was his league and constant as his mind :
 Great wealth he had, but well that wealth enjoy'd,
 And pow'r, heaven's noblest gift, as nobly he employ'd.

III.

To raise the honours of his spotless state,
 (A joy too seldom known in regal life !)
 Fortune had blest'd him with an equal mate,
 And giv'n the fair Eltheta to his wife :
 The graceful queen, majestic to the view,
 Whose blooming youth had blest'd the hero's arms,
 Her high descent from great Arfaces drew,
 And native dignity adorn'd her charms ;
 Two manly sons their faithful union bound,
 And one unblemish'd maid with ev'ry virtue crown'd.

IV.

Algarfise first who grac'd his youthful bed,
 Breath'd all the victor's irresistible flame ;
 In camps beneath his father's conduct bred,
 His warrior bosom swell'd for endless fame ;
 Well practis'd he the daring troops to head,
 Bold to attack or strike the steady blow,

Or

Or skill'd with art the patient march to lead
O'er the long defart, and surprife the foe !
With miffive death to guard the wheeling rear,
As darts the bolt of Jove, and fhines to difappear.

v.

But young Camballo's more reflective mind
From his great fire's immediate temper drew
A fofter turn, and ftudiously inclin'd
To judge of fame in a fuperior view ;
To mend the genius of the barren foil,
With prudent laws the focial ties to bind,
To cherifh commerce, and encourage toil,
With health the youth to form, with truth the mind ;
Arts, whence the public welfare takes its rife,
And empire lifts her head, exalted to the fkies !

vi.

Beneath fome rooted oak's projected fhade,
Where twine the laurel and the olive bloom,
In mildeft grace amidft the fhelter'd bed,
The naſcent roſe diſplays its ſoft perfume :
Such Canace with all becoming ſtate,
While love enthron'd from her enchanting brow
Diſpers'd a thouſand arrows wing'd with fate,
And ſmil'd to rule th' admiring world below !

Her form was harmony, all grace her air,
As if perfection, pleas'd, had plac'd its centre there!

VII.

No affectation fully'd beauty's pride ;
No vanity bespoke a wanton fire ;
In all her action virtue seem'd to guide,
Nor knew her chaster breast a loose desire :
As through the lucid diamond's polish'd face
Refulgent pierce the treasur'd rays of light,
No spot the native lustre can deface,
Which view'd in ev'ry shape is always bright :
So through fair beauty's mirror undefil'd,
With still-attractive charms internal wisdom smil'd.

VIII.

Now twice ten years had good Cambuscan reign'd,
By early wars secur'd in honour'd ease,
And peace at home, and fame abroad maintain'd,
Mark'd the meridian glory of his days.
In those blest times no labour'd structures rose,
Where grandeur from the public ruin springs,
The splendid trophies of a people's woes !
The dearly purchas'd palaces of kings !
Far other state his dignity supports,
Beyond the borrow'd blaze of Europe's gilded courts.
Yet

IX.

Yet goodness still a nobler show supply'd,
 Than glittering guards to awe the subject eye;
 The hospitable gates were ever wide,
 And safe the wretched to their prince drew nigh.
 As the warm sun diffuses golden day,
 So smil'd the common father of the land.
 As spreads o'er earth the all-enlivening ray,
 So felt the meanest his extensive hand.
 Happy, where thus the sov'reign's bounty warms,
 And goodness lends to pow'r a plenitude of charms.

X.

From Aries now approach'd the solar flame,
 While wakeful spring the wint'ry chain unbinds;
 Nature re-kindles to the amorous beam,
 And swells luxuriant in the western winds;
 At Flora's call a thousand beauties rise,
 To dress with sweets the fair enamell'd ground,
 And to the happy sense and ravish'd eyes
 Waft new delight and fragrant pleasure round.
 Each bird proclaims his joy, and through the grove
 Resounds the heavenly song of harmony and love!

XI.

The season this, when (so the prophet taught)
 The joyful city kept the holy feast,

Which the wild Saracen with secret thought
 Reveres, the Bairam of the turban'd East:
 On whose preceding eve, with wonted state,
 Through ev'ry street the royal herald's sound
 Proclaims Cambuscan's feast to crowds, who wait
 With fond acclaiming joy their passage round:
 Peace smiles on ev'ry brow.—and Sarra glad
 Prepares to keep the day, in all her pomp array'd.

XII.

Now rose Aurora, robed in pleasing gray,
 Her sober mantle edg'd with beamy gold;
 The early clarion hails the dawning ray,
 The gates their iron portals wide unfold;
 High on a rock, encircled by the flood,
 Where silver mazes oft deceiv'd the eyes,
 The palace rose: below the city stood,
 In circuit fair, and glitter'd to the skies.
 A gentle rising fill'd the space between,
 With sylvan pride adorn'd, and banks of native green.

XIII.

Here, so the sultan's honour'd mandate bore,
 Soon as the sun disclos'd his orient pride,
 Through the glad multitude that throng'd before,
 The Tartar lords conven'd on ev'ry side:

Along

Along the fair ascent, in shining train,
 Towards the palace march the noble band ;
 Pleas'd to renew their annual vows again,
 To see their king, and hail his just command ;
 And wish to the past years by fate decreed,
 In fair continued course—the future may succeed.

XIV.

But wise Cambuscan, who observant knew
 The pow'r supreme from whom all greatness flows,
 On this peculiar day with homage due
 To heaven returns the service grandeur owes.
 No vain idolatry his heart deceiv'd,
 No flattering names of *mighty, high, or great* ;
 Grateful he offers ev'ry praise receiv'd
 From a glad people and a happy state ;
 And chiefly on this morn his heart prepares
 To pay his humble thanks in sacrifice and pray'rs.

XV.

The pomp begins, the yielding crowd give way ;
 A thousand horse the bright procession lead ;
 A chosen troop, with bows and quivers gay,
 And bold Algarfise glitters at their head !
 Toil mark'd each limb, and on their hardy brow
 Sate dreadful valour, mix'd with awe severe :

Yet

Yet each seem'd pleas'd to grace the triumph now,
 And peace had soften'd half the victor's air :
 While as they pass, redoubled shouts arise,
 And Oxus' hilly banks the echo long supplies.

XVI.

The pontiffs next, administrators of law,
 The hoary Molla and the Cadi sage,
 Whose venerable looks impress'd an awe ;
 For wisdom gives new dignity to age.
 Not the sour aspect, nor the formal beard,
 Nor faint-like visage, nor dejected air ;
 But virtue dress'd in cheerfulness appear'd,
 And health and temperance were pictur'd there.
 The joy'd spectators much their sight approve,
 Whose goodness careful gain'd the people's honest
 love.

XVII.

All in the midst, with precious care inroll'd
 In tissued bands bedrop'd with many a gem,
 A camel proud, bedeck'd with silk and gold,
 The Koran bore, which Mussulmen esteem.
 Around the Emirs, whose illustrious race
 From the great prophet claims its high descent,

All

All robed in green advanc'd with gentle pace,
Bestowing numerous blessings as they went :
A silence deep ensues,—and ev'ry look
With conscious awe salutes the heaven-descended book.

XVIII.

Then came the merchants, an unnumber'd band,
With more familiar mien, the sons of peace ;
For commerce, now establish'd through the land,
Had shed its sweets, and dwelt in ev'ry face :
Plain was their garb, and free from gaudy pride ;
For yet no baneful luxury was known ;
But wealth domestic well that show supplied,
And frugal manners kept their wealth their own :
Fond of the arts he rais'd, with gentle air,
Camballo graceful rode a Polish courser fair.

XIX.

Amidst the guardian sages of the throne,
Where prudent counsels prop'd his settled state,
Distinguish'd far, the much-lov'd monarch shone,
Less in magnificence than virtue great :
Not the rich crimson which his person dress'd,
Nor Indian diamond his tiara crown'd ;
Not the Siberian fur, nor Persian vest,
Nor Syrian sabre which his vesture bound ;

Such

Such wide respect produc'd, or fond acclaim,
As join'd in friendly bands the king's and father's
name.

XX.

Here the enfeebled fight its force excell'd,
Eager its great protector to survey;
As fond the eye of infancy beheld,
Striving to bear some feature fond away;
That age the grateful image might renew,
That youth might strong imprint Cambuscan's
name,

While to the worthy monarch's smiling view
His people's bliss in present prospect came:
A pleasure this which virtue only finds,
The wreath which truth confers, and fame eternal
binds.

XXI.

The rites perform'd, and every prayer address'd,
Which faith exacts, or piety can pay;
The day's fair interval the people pass'd
In manly exercise, and floral play:
Algarfise pleas'd the active youth regards,
Excites the modest, and commends the brave;

Assigns

Assigns proportion'd merit its rewards,
And teaches all with vigour to behave ;
In mimic squadrons forms the flying horse,
And animates the rage, and order of the course.

XXII.

Meanwhile Cambuscan, with the elder chiefs,
And young Camballo held the cool debate ;
With care consult to ease the people's griefs,
The means to strengthen and improve the state.
From neighb'ring tribes commission'd envoys press,
To court his friendship, or his league renew ;
From subject provinces with glad address
New deputies salute their monarch's view ;
Who all with condescending grace receives,
And tenderly to each his just instructions gives.

XXIII.

Now from the zenith flam'd the orb of day,
When to the royal square, selected place,
The warlike trumpet warns the guests away,
Where the king's banquet spreads its gladsome face :
Decent around the pleas'd attendants smile,
Appointed to fulfil their lord's commands ;
The meanest they salute with courteous style,
And not a stranger unregarded stands.

Well

Well from their prince they learn the gentle art
With fair humanity to charm the honest heart.

XXIV.

Near hand, allotted to the princely train,
A spacious hall receiv'd each nobler guest;
Where to the dazzled eye a brighter scene
Display'd the treasures of the downy east;
The walls dispread with Persia's tap'stry shine;
The azure roof emboss'd with figur'd gold;
Of Casbin's richest loom the carpets twine,
Where many a flow'ry maze appear'd enroll'd;
And golden censers, plac'd in proper room,
With all Arabia's sweets embalm'd the fragrant dome.

XXV.

Silent around the slaves attendant wait,
Silent the watchful grooms dispose the feast;
Silence and order mark the Asian state,
The sign imperial, and submissive breast:
With China's largest bowls they spread the board,
From ev'ry element the spoils they take,
The richest dainties Sarra can afford,
Fish from the stream, and fowls that haunt the lake:
The fawn and stag the spacious forests yield,
And herbs and various fruits the cultivated field.

Their

XXVI.

Their drinks, ſherbets attemper'd to the taſte,
A thouſand diff'rent ways with eaſtern art ;
Where mingling ſpices give a racy zeſt,
And warm, like cordial wine, the gladden'd heart.
Meantime the commons with inferior fare,
Harſh ſeeming to our nicer eye, regale ;
The foreſt fruits, the curdled milk of mare,
Or grain, the product of the fertile vale :
With pureſt water from the cryſtal ſtream,
That feeds with cool ſupplies life's quick conſuming
flame !

XXVII.

Concludes the feaſt, with ev'ry ſervice paid,
When from the public ſquare's capacious bound,
Appear full fifty youths in white array'd,
Of comely form, with rich tiaras crown'd ;
Each at his ſide with care attendant leads
A ſhapely courſer of Tartarian breed ;
Who neighing ſeems to ſpurn the ground he treads,
As conſcious of his ſervitude decreed :
Marks of that duty Sarra loyal owes,
For all the peaceful ſweets Cambuſcan's reign beſtows !
An

XXVIII.

An hundred virgins, each of various hue,
 In flowing robes of brightest azure drest,
 Succeed in soft procession, two by two :
 Their beauteous brows with flow'ry chaplets
 grac'd,
 Their lovely hands a shining treasure bore,
 Which new-establish'd commerce brought from far,
 The Indian gem, the pearl from Ormus' shore,
 The Tyrian purple, and the painted jar ;
 Or the domestic spoils of Sarra's field,
 The costly ermin'd furs her ample forests yield.

XXIX.

These presents offer'd with respectful care,
 Rewarded by the gracious monarch's smile,
 Amidst the dome a second train appear
 Of foreign beauties from Circassia's soil :
 From native sweets the infant captives brought
 With melting charms barbaric hearts to move,
 Early in ev'ry art of pleasing taught,
 To sing, to smile, to languish, and to love !
 Magnificently gay the band advance,
 And with harmonious air begin the wanton dance !

At

XXX.

At this, a sight too loose for wisdom's awe,
 Whose strictness views such mirth with eye severe,
 Prepare the king and sages to withdraw,
 That youth its more appropriate joys may share ;
 When unforeseen, as wak'ning tempests rise,
 When troubled ocean heaves with conscious fear ;
 Such, and so strange the gath'ring murmur flies,
 Increasing, till it gains the royal ear :
 Sudden the music stops—the dancers cease,
 And new-born wonder sits confess'd in ev'ry face.

XXXI.

Soon shines the cause—for now the crowd divides,
 When nobly mounted, of distinguish'd mien,
 Ent'ring, a graceful stranger boldly rides ;
 His helm unbrac'd, and in his visage seen
 Valour, by long experience made sedate :—
 His courser form'd of brass, whose burnish'd light
 Reflected beamy rays of mimic heat ;
 A moving meteor to the dazzled sight !
 Proud of his charge, he fiercely glanc'd disdain,
 And bent his shapely neck beneath the potent rein.

XXXII.

The knight's right hand the flaming steed compell'd
 With gentle awe, and half his rage repress'd ;

His left to view a polish'd mirror held,
 Of oval form, in figur'd gold enchas'd :
 His finger glitter'd with the radiant pride
 An oriental saphyr wide display'd :
 A naked scymitar adorn'd his side ;
 With torquoise-hilt, of damask'd steel the blade :
 His comely personage, and strange attire,
 Cambuscan studious eyes, and much the court admire.

XXXIII.

Then mild advancing, where th' imperial throne
 Erected to the distant sight ascends ;
 Quick from his wondrous steed alighting down,
 Before the king the gentle envoy bends !
 Then to the throng'd assembly turns his eyes,
 With due obedience paid to all around ;
 While general silence marks a pleas'd surprise,
 And not a whisper steals along the ground :
 Each aspect earnest on the issue hung,
 When thus the knight began, with no ungraceful tongue !

XXXIV.

“ To thee, for virtue as for arms renown'd,
 “ Whose name to distant lands extends its rays ;
 “ Whose youth with fame, whose age with honours
 crown'd,
 “ Asia repeats !—too narrow for thy praise !

“ Our

" Our holy Califf, whose all-righteous sway
 " Through happy nations spreads one common
 smile ;
 " Northward from Ormus to the Euxine Sea,
 " And west from Indus to the banks of Nile ;
 " To thee, Al-raschid, round whose renown'd head
 " May heav'n its balmy dew of constant blessings
 shed !

XXXV.

" To thee, whose piety his zeal befriends,
 " Whose arms have triumph'd in the prophet's
 cause,
 " These marks of amity our Califf sends,
 " Proofs of his estimation and applause !
 " Nor slight the presents, though no form they wear,
 " That seems attractive to a monarch's eye ;
 " More secret worth they boast, and virtues rare,
 " Than all the treasures hid beneath the sky,
 " Which heav'n-taught science only can bestow,
 " And mystic Talismans, that rule the world below.

XXXVI.

" This steed, which, mighty prince, you now behold
 " As motionless—though recent from the reins,
 C 2 " Form'd

" Form'd though in semblance of metallic mould,
 " Yet in himself the springs of life retains :
 " Less fleet the feather'd arrow wings its way,
 " Borne on the pinions of the breezy wind ;
 " Less swift the canvass'd vessel skims the sea,
 " Than leave his steps the less'ning space behind,
 " Brave the surrounding deep, where oceans flow,
 " Or mount the steep broad rock, and lose the plain
 below !

XXXVII.

" Or, would'st thou from the sphere terrestrial rise,
 " And learn the boundless regions of the air,
 " Th' aerial guide shall waft thee through the skies
 " To the remotest star that glitters there.
 " Firm shall he bear thy trusted weight impress'd
 " Through floods that threaten, or through fires
 that glow ;
 " Or guard thee with impenetrable breast
 " Through pointed javelins o'er the prostrate foe :
 " For the sage author form'd his just design
 " With planetary skill, and artifice divine !

XXXVIII.

" Yet rooted shall the beauteous image stand,
 " A lifeless monument shall press the place ;
 " Void

- " Void of all sense, and deaf to all command,
 " Nor human force disturb it from its base ;
 " Unless thy thought the mystic words retain,
 " That wake to motion the insensate mass ;
 " That give direction to the rapid rein,
 " Or stop the springs of animated brass."

He paus'd :—diffusive as the murmur ran,
 When thus resuming soon—th' ambassador began :

XXXIX.

- " This mirror—so our empress fair commands,
 " As pledge of mutual faith and friendship meant—
 " To thy imperial consort's beauteous hands,
 " With grateful joy, commission'd, I present.
 " No specious forms from hence reflected glare,
 " No shadowy objects of material kind ;
 " But mental truths within disclos'd appear ;
 " Fate's future births enquiry here shall find ;
 " And in the optic plane thy thought shall trace
 " The various fortunes wait thy long descending race.

XL.

- " Does war or faction threat thy promis'd reign ?
 " Here shalt thou see the perils, and avert ;
 " Does plague or famine hover near thy plain ?
 " A timely caution shall arise from art :

" If falsehood lurks in flatt'ry's fair disguise ?

" Here truth's fair face shall point the Syren's face:

" If vice by virtue's ruin aims to rise ?

" Here shall it meet thy knowledge and disgrace :

" And thy observant thought with ease shall find

" The variegated shapes that veil the human mind.

XL I.

" Here pleas'd thy gentle sultaness shall prove

" A thousand ways the sportive mirror's skill ;

" Survey the crafts of jealousy and love,

" The stratagems that wait a female will ;

" Through ev'ry maze the shifting heart pursue,

" From fancy's start to reason's close retreat ;

" Observe imagination's subtle clue,

" And mark ideas how they rise and set.

" Gain'd but the key—which to the queen I bear,

" Long may her virtues prove the guardian mirror's care !"

XL II.

So said—the present with complacent air

To an attendant near the envoy gave ;

When thus proceeding—" Further speaks my care,

" If thou, all gracious monarch, grant the leave !

" For

- " For thus our sov'reign lady bade me say;
" Pleas'd has she heard a northern princess' fame :
" One faith we keep, one prophet we obey ;
" Let closer bands unite our sister's name.
" The rose of Tigris Sarra's violet woos,
" And with this mystic ring her valu'd friendship sues.

XLIII.

- " When from the earth the King of Wisdom fled,
" Whose science pierc'd through matter's bound-
less field;
" When mourn'd the east that Salomon was dead,
" To whom the realms of spirit stood reveal'd ;
" The potent seal incircling grac'd his hand,
" Whence all its pow'r this gem's impresson takes ;
" Obedient nature feels its wide command,
" And at its call a new creation breaks.
" Each vegetable birth its power reveals,
" The noxious weed that kills, or plant that whole-
some heals.

XLIV.

- " Or, would the princess, while with cheerful eyes
" She views the beauties of the op'ning spring,
" Curious enquire the language of the skies,
" Or learn the notes the feather'd nations sing ?

" Hence shall the vocal natives of the groves
 " With well-known hymns salute her early walk ;
 " Hence shall their laws, their manners, and their
 loves
 " Become familiar subjects of her talk :
 " And while the sylvan world her thoughts command,
 " Her grateful mind shall own a princess' gen'rous
 hand."

XLV.

He said, and bow'd, and speech resum'd once more,
 While from his side he drew the shining blade ;
 " And last this gift the Califf's order bore,
 " Be to your princely sons with honour paid :
 " Such is the temper of the deadly steel,
 " Nor the firm marble, nor the rooted oak,
 " Not arms of adamant its touch can feel
 " Unmov'd, or bear the fury of its stroke :
 " No earthly wight its contest may endure,
 " No skill of pharmacy its least erasure cure.

XLVI.

" Yet strange, though true, its double charms prevail,
 " With friendly care to raise the vanquish'd foe ;
 " The fatal wound the hilt alone can heal,
 " And with immediate ease relieve the blow ;
 " From

“ From the deep gash though stream’d the vital flood,
“ And the wing’d soul fate ready to depart ;
“ Restrain’d, at once shall stop the issuing blood,
“ With cordial life again to warm the heart !
“ Its sov’reign touch the balm of health restore
“ As mercy’s gentle hand allays the rage of pow’r.

XLVII.

“ Nor judge, great prince, the gifts as ill assign’d,
“ Directed by our Califf’s holy views :
“ Safe is the steed in thy disposing mind,
“ Whose virtue never can his pow’r abuse :
“ The mirror well thy consort may behold,
“ Reflecting all her innocence sincere :
“ Well may the ring thy daughter’s hand enfold,
“ Whose soul is like the spotless person, fair :
“ And, aided by the sword, thy future race
“ Shall to the toils of war unite the arts of peace !”

XLVIII.

Submits he ceas’d :—when rising from his throne
The monarch mild descending stretch’d his hand,
Well pleas’d the grateful embassy to own,
Borne by the service of so wise a hand :
When thus :—“ Kind stranger ! not the voice of fame,
“ That spreads its sound diffus’d to either pole,
“ Can

" Can raise the lustre of our Califf's name,
 " Or more endear his virtues to my soul :
 " In whom the prophet's viceroy I revere,
 " And with continued joy his daily praises hear !

XLIX.

" His noble gifts with pleasure I receive,
 " Which secret worth and mystic value boast ;
 " But more esteem the faith he yields to give,
 " His friendship ever wish'd and honour'd most.
 " Yet rare thy presents, and exceeding far
 " The various gems our eastern world brings forth,
 " The ruby rich, the diamond's mimic star,
 " Or the unblemish'd pearl of orient worth ;
 " Greatly beyond what Sarra's regions lend,
 " Or all the sylvan spoils her ample forests send.

L.

" Welcome thy presence on this festal day,
 " To grace the honours of our royal feast,
 " When pleasure fits on ev'ry aspect gay,
 " And in my people's joy is mine confess'd :
 " Though us'd to better cheer, which heav'n bestows
 " On lands in happier climes their lot assign'd ;
 " Where Bagdad rises, or where Tygris flows,
 " And earth untaught is still benignly kind :
 " Where

" Where the mild sun declines in beauty gay,
" Or beams with orient charms to dress the face of
day.

LI.

" Yet here till thy return the greeting find,
" Our barren country yields the toiler's use ;
" Where nature won, and by compulsion kind,
" Consents but coy to aid the slow produce :
" Yet such the pow'r of the industrious hand,
" That year by year the soil more kindly grows ;
" Art pours new beauties o'er the changing land,
" And by degrees increasing plenty flows ;
" Our forests shrink, as new plantations rise,
" And culture spreads new fields to the delighted skies.

LII.

" Meantime, associate at our royal board,
" Accept the cares our gratitude would pay ;
" Freely command what Sarra can afford,
" To ease the labours of the tedious way."
He ceas'd—and smiling with a gracious hand
He plac'd the honour'd stranger by his side ;
While round the noblest chiefs, a shining band,
Approach to welcome him with decent pride.
His courteous speech and manner all admire,
And of the Syrian court the news they much enquire.

Now

LIII.

Now plenteous had the gentle envoy din'd,
Pleas'd with the treatment which the monarch gave,
When from the zenith now the sun declin'd,
To cool his ardors in the Caspian wave ;
When thus the king—" Not here we boast the means
" To give thy character the honours due ;
" One easy step to crown thy toil remains ;
" Eastward our regal castle stands in view :
" There take thy rest most welcome, and receive
" That friendship and respect our amity shall give."

LIV.

The monarch rose—th' officious guard attend ;
The knight with graceful air his courser leads,
On horseback with the Tartar prince ascends,
And to the palace all the pomp proceeds :
But most his steed from the admiring crowd
New wonder drew, and much enquiry rais'd :
So stately was his port, so firm he trod,
That all his gesture and proportion prais'd ;
And own'd, of foreign and domestic breed,
Eye never yet had seen a more majestic steed.

LV.

Of due dimensions was his mediate size,
While, loosely floating from his swan-like crest,
Bright

Bright wav'd his mane : deep piercing were his eyes,
Strong were his limbs, and broad his burnish'd breast ;
Thick from his nostrils breath'd the fiery steam ;
His tail behind a length of splendour flew ;
He seem'd to move within an orb of flame !

So much appear'd the wondrous object new,
That all intent pursue th' amazing sight,
So much does vulgar minds all novelty delight !

LVI.

Now to the palace reach'd the cavalcade,
Where the strange warrior and the king alight,
And with his usual grace Cambuscan paid
Repeated welcome to the Syrian knight.
Strict o'er his horse's neck the passive reins
With artificial care the envoy drew,
When, lo ! all motionless the form remains,
Nor life discover'd, nor sensation knew :
Fix'd as the basis of the rocky stone,
The dead inactive brass return'd a hollow groan.

LVII.

They bear the Califf's sword before the king,
While to the hall of state the knight attends ;
Inward the mirror and the mystic ring
To the imperial fair the sultan sends ;

Kindly

Kindly requiring to the present feast

The beauteous queen and princess may repair,
With royal kindness to regale their guest,

And all the rites of hospitable care ;
That Syrian dames from his report may know,
That gentleness can live amidst a land of snow !

LVIII.

Meantime without, around the famous horse

In crowds the Usbeck city seems to spread ;
Much they survey his make, and much discourse,
As varied notions fill the vulgar head :

To magic some the strange effects impute,
Each to his fancy forms a diff'rent cause ;
Little they reason, greatly they dispute,

And still the loudest most attention draws :
As ignorance to knowledge pores its route,
Never proceeds direct—but wanders still about.

LIX.

Like as a swarm of bees new-gath'ring play,

Issuing advent'rous from their native home ;
They spread thick murm'ring to the evening-ray,
And yet of habitation dubious roam ;
Till the wise husbandman with tuneful sound
Beneath the shade the vagrant tumult draws ;

They

They wand'ring stop, and view the dome around,
And fix their colony with loud applause :
So circling round the horse the Tartars crowd,
And speak their vast surprize with acclamations loud !

LX.

Return we now, invited to the hall,
Where fairer objects our attendance claim ;
Such as are envy'd and admir'd by all,
The graceful courtier, and the beauteous dame.
What, though no dances fir'd the virgin chaste,
Less charming did the mild engagers seem ?
What, though no smiles the courtier's brow defac'd,
Less worthy was his honour of esteem ?
To us, indeed, such manners wild may show,
Where dress creates a belle, and vanity a beau !

LXI.

Yet as restraint but fans the am'rous fire,
And nature's laws can never be suppress'd ;
So the soft bosom heav'd with young desire,
And the fond eye the tender heart confess'd :
Venus, who then in Pisces held her court,
With friendly rays beheld th' enamour'd pair,
Approv'd the intercourse, and bless'd the sport,
Beyond my faint description to declare :

Her

Her arts the Roman muse can better tell,
 For none should sing of love, but those his influence
 feel.

LXII.

Nor wanted cordial drinks, or viands rare,
 To cheer the soul and grace the royal feast :
 The gentle empress made that task her care,
 With choicest fare to treat the grateful guest.
 But more than all her matchless converse charm'd,
 Where wisdom flow'd from the instructed heart :
 Where beam'd kind gentleness, and beaming warm'd
 With cunning softness the attracted heart.
 Scarce could the ravish'd knight his looks refrain ;
 Or if she ceas'd, not with the joy commence again.

LXIII.

Oft to the king unseen he turn'd his eyes,
 Or in the sons remark'd their father's air ;
 Oft he beheld the queen with new surprise,
 But most the princess, amiably fair !
 The more he look'd he saw on each impress
 The marks of majesty that awe the sight,
 An air of greatness not to be express'd,
 Which calls for homage, while it gives delight ;
 Something

Something that more of dignity confers,
Than all the glittering toys the ermin'd monarch
wears.

LXIV.

Hard to describe, whence springs this air assign'd
In man and brute to excellence of race ;
This outward mark of a superior mind,
That seems to claim precedence of place ;
But that experience shows by constant course
The noblest animals their like create ;
From the selected fire, the generous horse
Derives his fire, and springs from earth elate ;
Hears the glad trumpet calling from afar,
And rapid pours his flight amidst the rage of war.

LXV.

In man's imperial race th' effect's the same,
Whatever cause the like distinction breeds ;
Whether from mutual passion springs the flame,
Or minds congenial stamp the vital seeds :
Else on extended Guinea's torrid coast,
Where the broad mouth and nose depreſt prevail,
In thoſe who regal blood and lineage boaſt,
Why do the gen'ral features rarely fail ?

Why shows the Austrian lip the Austrian line?
And in some semblant mark the hero loves to shine?

LXVI.

Now the shrill trumpet warn'd the flight of day,
The loud Muëzin call'd to ev'ning pray'r ;
When rose Cambuscan, such his usual way,
With all his court to worship to repair.
That duty paid—returning as they pass
Along the spacious castle's outer square,
The sultan stop'd to view the steed of brass,
Incompass'd as he stood by numbers there,
And begs the knight the secret would disclose,
To which the beauteous form the pow'rs of motion
owes.

LXVII.

To whom the knight—" O king ! whose just concern

" Still nourishes devotion's purest flame ;
" Nor need I tell, nor need thy wisdom learn,
" The wonders wrought by the Almighty name.
" By this inspir'd our holy prophet wrought
" Performances exceeding reason's line ;
" High miracles beyond the reach of thought,
" That infidels might own the faith divine ;

" Whose

“ Whose call the earth and air and fire obey,
“ And the relentless grave, and the unfathom'd sea !

LXVIII.

“ When, taught by this, the slumb'ring steed you
wake,

“ Firm seize the reins, and with this pin secure ;
“ Undaunted then the destin'd journey take,
“ Through ev'ry element the course is sure.
“ Wouldst thou thy march continue, or be still,
“ Touch but the pin, and whisper but the word,
“ The steed obedient shall observe thy will,
“ Shall vanish at thy call, or stand restor'd ;
“ Only the bridle and the pin retain,
“ Else lost is ev'ry care, and every project vain.”

LXIX.

So said—he to the king's attentive ear

With rev'rence due the mystic word unfolds :
The monarch bow'd, and with concealing care
The word repeats, and fast the bridle holds ;
Quick as life's current glides along the veins,
The warm sensation to his touch perceiv'd,
That thaw'd the stiffness of the brazen reins,
While the firm chest with new vibration heav'd :

His eyes their fire resum'd, he rais'd his head,
And stately walk'd along, as pleas'd the sultan led.

LXX.

Cambuscan much the gentle steed caress'd,
Thus grown familiar to his leading hand :
The gentle steed an equal joy confess'd,
To serve the generous monarch's just command :
Much to the num'rous court assembled round
The king his shape and his behaviour prais'd ;
The court applauding still return'd the sound,
And all the voice of admiration rais'd :
Till from his neck the reins at once he drew,
And vanish'd quick the steed from ev'ry mortal's
view.

LXXI.

The sword and bridle with peculiar care,
Deputed nobles, by the king's command,
Safe to the castle's strongest fortrefs bear,
Where all the monarch's ample treasures stand.
The royal company direct return,
In social mirth to crown the happy night ;
While round perfum'd a thousand tapers burn,
And the whole palace seems illumin'd bright :

The

The feast renews, the converse sprightly grows,
And cheerfulness around her balmy influence throws.

LXXII.

The worthy king, whose long experienc'd years
Had made him judge of manners and of minds,
Pleas'd with the Syrian's converse much appears,
For virtue soon its own resemblance finds ;
Some secret sympathy of nature draws
With its coercive bands the noble soul ;
As unisons accord harmonious cause,
Or the fond needle trembles to its pole :
'Tis thus each other know the truly great,
Without the tedious forms inferior friendships wait.

LXXIII.

Meantime between the princes rose debate
About the wondrous steed the envoy brought,
Algarfise urging, with his usual heat,
The motion some informing genie wrought :
But cool Camballo with a sceptic air
Seem'd to believe the secret lay within,
That hid remain'd the springs of action there,
And mov'd or ceas'd directed by the pin :
Each brings new proofs the other to confute,
Till to the monarch's ear arriv'd the warm dispute.

LXXIV.

Silent awhile the king reflection made,
 And saw the point not easy to decide ;
 Till kind remembrance usher'd to his aid
 A hoary sage, whose skill he oft had try'd ;
 By birth a Mede, but whose enquiring fight
 Each region of the travell'd east had known,
 Wisdom the object sole of his delight,
 And the whole sphere of knowledge seem'd his own.
 Nor read in books alone, his generous mind
 Embrac'd with cordial zeal the welfare of mankind.

LXXV.

The various faiths the peopled world divide
 Justly impartial had his thought survey'd ;
 Reason his standard still, and truth his guide,
 Nor int'rest, prejudice, or passion weigh'd :
 The Magi's books he knew, the Brachmin's lore,
 Th' Egyptian figure, and the Jewish rite,
 The Christian law, intended to restore,
 But now defac'd by superstition quite :
 With the mix'd plan th' Arabian prophet drew,
 O'er Asia now which spread, as new religions do.

LXXVI.

He saw that nature, through her wide command,
 O'er all her works diffus'd one equal smile ;

Nor

Nor kept the bounties of her lavish hand
 Confin'd to this or that peculiar foil :
 He knew, that vain was ev'ry art, design'd
 To check the freedom of the human will ;
 That no restraints could shackle up the mind,
 Which, self-determin'd, kept her empire still :
 And in th' extended scene of human race,
 As varied were the thoughts, as various was the face !

LXXVII.

Hence Casroes (so the Median sage's name)
 This healing principle reflective drew ;
 Others' opinions candid not to blame,
 But calm the paths of wisdom to pursue :
 Pleas'd with the little nature's hand requires,
 Wealth, honour, pleasures, titles he disdain'd ;
 Few were his wants, as mod'rate his desires,
 The happy master of himself he reign'd !
 A joy to all but minds serene unknown,
 Beyond the wreaths of fame, or splendors of a throne.

LXXVIII.

On a fair bank, by Oxus' winding shore,
 Inclos'd with wood, a little spot he found ;
 There had he fix'd his rest, and, greatly poor,
 Liv'd on the fruits of his domestic ground :

Oft had Cambuscan, tir'd with cares of state,
 Sought the refreshment of his little cave;
 There philosophic held the cool debate,
 Nor scorn'd the counsels which his wisdom gave.
 Whose life reveal'd the value of his art,
 And to the learned head was join'd the honest heart.

LXXIX.

For him immediate then the sultan sends,
 His seasonable presence to require;
 The worthy sage the messenger attends,
 And comes obedient to the king's desire.
 His head with age's frost was silver'd o'er,
 But on his cheek still blush'd the temp'rate rose.
 Decent, though plain, a flowing robe he wore,
 And manly dignity his person shows.
 For such his carriage seem'd, and gentle port,
 As if his life had been no stranger to a court.

LXXX.

The Syrian knight (for so requests the king)
 The nature of the Califf's gifts explains;
 The horse, the sword, the mirror, and the ring,
 And points the qualities which each retains:
 When thus Cambuscan—"Cosroes! O declare,
 "For best the truth thy wisdom can impart,
 "Whence

“ Whence boast these presents such perfection rare ?

“ From nature springs the secret, or from art ?

“ Or animates the steed some pow’r divine ?

“ Or do mechanic wheels direct the bold design ?”

LXXXI.

To whom the sage—“ Not, mighty prince, we boast,

“ Of such mysterious gifts to judge the cause :

“ Least knows the wisest, when he knows the most,

“ Of matter’s properties, and motion’s laws :

“ Form’d of two principles distinguish’d quite,

“ We find distinctly our corporeal frame :

“ Spirit, we know, with matter can unite ;

“ Yet search in vain from whence the union came,

“ Or where subsists invisible the tie,

“ Which fastens life itself, and losing which we die.

LXXXII.

“ What gives commission to the wint’ry war,

“ When the loud storm enchafes the troubled deep,

“ Or sooths to peace the elemental jar,

“ And hushes the relenting winds to sleep :

“ What causes the pale moon’s alternate light,

“ By turns replenish, and by turns decay,

“ Fair as she glides along the face of night,

“ And shapes through mazy clouds her pathless
way :

“ Or

“ Or from what origin those clouds ascend,
 “ In vain our feeble sense would strive to comprehend.

LXXXIII.

“ All the phenomena of boundless air,
 “ Which strike with wonder the unsettled eye,
 “ The meteor’s flash, the comet’s ruddy glare,
 “ Or the loud thunder bursting from the sky;
 “ The dark eclipse, when o’er the orb of day
 “ Its gloomy stain prevailing darkness sheds;
 “ The shining bow, whose variegated ray
 “ O’er the pale cloud its painted circlet spreads;
 “ In vain our low researches would pursue,
 “ With weak defective schemes of science still untrue.

LXXXIV.

“ Yet science sees direct, far as it may,
 “ While ignorance in endless darkness pores;
 “ Safe treads the sage, where reason points the way,
 “ One sov’rign cause discovers and adores;
 “ The further that in nature’s road he treads,
 “ He sees eternal wisdom guide the whole:
 “ The more the glitt’ring page of heav’n he reads,
 “ He feels that wisdom penetrate the soul;
 “ And what the vulgar view with careless eyes,
 “ Silent contemplates he with pleasure and surprise.
 “ Matter

LXXXV.

- " Matter he fees, as struggling to a birth,
 " Through all its elemental forms aspire ;
" Earth rise from water, air refine from earth,
 " To mount, and purify itself in fire ;
" Fire, the first principle, whose vital ray,
 " Heat, motion, sense, and life productive breeds,
" That, circling from th' exhaustless source of day,
 " Wakens from death the dull material seeds ;
" That to itself attractive all invites,
" Till in the parent-cause creation fond unites !

LXXXVI.

- " This, sure, we know, that matter has its laws,
 " By which impell'd, the stubborn mass obeys ;
" That secret sympathy some objects draws,
 " And by its pow'r can seeming wonders raise :
" Hence, would it seem, that this mysterious horse,
 " Though form'd to semblance of material mould,
" Is taught to move by sympathetic force,
 " And to perform at will the actions told ;
" As the Greek Pegasus was fam'd to bear
" The bold Bellerophon through tracts of boundless
 air.

" Hence

LXXXVII.

" Hence taught, the sage to matter can infuse
 " New qualities to suit his just design ;
 " Can shape the mass subservient to his views,
 " And give the workmanship a stamp divine !
 " Thus, in the honour'd Califf's precious sword
 " Opposing virtues may their influence shed ;
 " The hilt may salutary balm afford,
 " To close the wound the edge relentless made.
 " As fam'd Achilles' spear confess'd the art,
 " To cure th' inflicted stroke, and ease the deadly
 smart.

LXXXVIII.

" Thus may the mirror and the mystic ring
 " The gentle knight's description well maintain ;
 " From planetary skill their virtues spring,
 " Which only deep-read science can attain :
 " As o'er affrighted Misraim's fertile land
 " The wand of Moses desolation spread,
 " Or grac'd the signet Salomon's right hand,
 " Whose pow'r could wake the slumbers of the
 dead :
 " Could from the eye remove the veil of night,
 " And place the realms of spirit to th' astonish'd sight.
 " But

LXXXIX.

“ But while, Cambuscan, thou exalt’st thy head,
“ In peaceful sway and foreign friendships blest,
“ Remember heav’n, that all thy greatness made,
“ Nor let weak pride pollute thy royal breast.
“ All that we see in life’s deceitful dream,
“ Like us, the vain spectators, glides away.
“ Only great Orosmanes shines the same,
“ Unwasted fountain of eternal day;
“ Who in himself all nature comprehends,
“ From whom all beings spring, in whom all being
ends.”

XC.

He ceas’d—attentive as the Syrian knight
Heard the sweet accents flowing from his tongue,
And felt within such exquisite delight,
He had not thought a summer’s audience long.
The monarch thanks return’d—th’ applauding crowd
With common voice repeat the sage’s praise:
Night now began to spread her heavy shroud,
And call the weary’d limbs to needful ease:
Cambuscan rose—the court retire to rest,
And on her midnight throne deep silence reigns
confest.

O gentle

XCI.

O gentle sleep ! thou cherisher of health !
 From temp'rance bred, the nurse of sweet repose !
 In whom the peasant finds a mine of wealth ;
 To whom his happiness the lover owes :
 Thou balm of life ! whose kindly warmth restores
 Light to the eyes, and vigour to the heart ;
 Whose presence luxury in vain implores,
 Kind while thou fly'st to take affliction's part ;
 Say, by what magic fetters dost thou bind
 In thy delightful thrall the agitated mind ?

XCII.

Inthron'd on mazy Oxus' verdant shore,
 We left thee, goddess, of thy sway posselt ;
 Cambuscan's palace felt thy peaceful pow'r,
 And through the gloom thy influence fate confest :
 Fair dreams, thy beauteous handmaids, all around
 To ev'ry guest thy busy mandates spread ;
 Each, by their ministry, contented found,
 The sep'rate joy to which their wishes led :
 Soft am'rous vows th' unblushing virgin hears,
 And to the warrior's view the glitt'ring camp appears !

XCIII.

Thee, placid queen of night, the sultan own'd,
 In shining visions of recover'd arms :

Thou

Thou to the Syrian lengthen'd wisdom's sound,
 And Cosroes still his fix'd attention charms :
 But most the Tartar princess claim'd thy care,
 To sooth the soft impatience of her breast ;
 Her curious thoughts the ring's impressiion bear,
 And new ideas interrupt her rest ;
 In fancy she surveys the sylvan scenes,
 And hears the feather'd choirs, and learns their tune-
 ful strains !

XCIV.

Calm were her usual slumbers wont to be ;
 Calm as the current of her temp'rate blood ;
 Calm as her blameless soul, from passions free,
 That knew no evil, and that wish'd all good !
 Yet something, whence she knew not, what or how,
 Invasive now infected her repose ;
 She felt soft quiet vanish from her brow,
 And ere the morning dawn'd, the princess rose :
 She calls her virgin-train, who near remain'd ;
 And instant at her call her virgin-train attend.

XCV.

Great was their fright, and obvious their concern,
 What cause so soon their gentle mistress rais'd ;
 Till, from herself inform'd, her health they learn,
 And by her smiles they find their fears appeas'd ;
 But

But chief Olinda—more a friend than slave,
Whom from Podolia lawless rapine drew;
Whom to his daughter great Cambuscan gave,
By purchase his, ere yet herself she knew :
Whose modest worth had gain'd the prince's ear,
By long experienc'd ties of faithful duty dear !

xcvi.

Now rosy morn, the harbinger of day,
Beam'd o'er the azure hills with radiance bright ;
Awak'ning nature felt the gladsome ray,
And smil'd as conscious of approaching light ;
When the fair prince's issu'd to the plain,
Attended by a band of lovely maids ;
Such Cynthia, when, amidst her sportive train,
Her early horn resounds in Latmos' shades :
Cloth'd in a lightsome dress, thus bends her way,
To grace the flow'ry field, this charming Queen of
May !

xcvii.

By Oxus' side, engirt with wood-brow'd hills,
A spacious compass lay the sylvan scene ;
Through which clear-streaming ran two mazy rills,
That fed the soil with ever-living green :
But as the ground unequal check'd the view,
So by degrees its varied beauties rose ;

Dales,

Dales, rocks, or groves from landskips ever new,
And blending prospects new delights disclose.
Nature unrivall'd here maintain'd her part,
Too sweetly wild for chance, too greatly bold for art.

XCVIII.

From teeming earth the vapour now exhal'd,
That courts the presence of the orient sun;
But through the mist the ruddy orb prevail'd,
All warm with joy, his daily course to run.
By the clear river stretch'd the winding vale,
Where, as it often chanc'd, the princess stray'd;
A thousand sweets embalm'd the spicy gale,
A thousand flow'rs luxuriant bless'd the mead,
Which, as her virgins sport, they pull with care,
The morning-wreath to form, for Canace to wear!

XCIX.

There safe the elk, the antelope, and deer
The harmless shelter of the place enjoy'd;
Crop'd the sweet herb, or drank the fountain clear;
No fears alarm'd them; for no foes annoy'd:
With vocal music now the forests ring,
As artless love inspires the melting voice;
And nature, kindling at the smile of spring,
Teaches her happy children to rejoice.

Fair Canace the soft sensation feels,
And with the whisp'ring breeze the virtuous pleasure
steals.

C.

As from the native blind's unconscious eyes
The skilful leech th' affailing speck withdraws ;
Sudden he sees a world unknown arise,
Where objects multiply'd confusion cause :
With such emotion did the princess' ear
Receive the language of the woods around ;
So, by her mystic ring instructed, hear,
That not devoid of reason was the sound ;
While with responsive note the nations sing,
"Hail to the rose of May ! Hail, lovely queen of
spring !"

CI.

But stop we here, ere too prolix we be ;
The wanton error that of many a muse,
Who, lur'd by ev'ry flow'r, and ev'ry tree,
Too far the too inviting path pursues.
Lest the tir'd ear reject the tedious strain,
Judgment should still the flights of fancy guide ;
The point propos'd should reason firm retain,
That fame may o'er the lasting work preside.

Mind

Mind we th' unerring law of sacred song,
That the delightful tale should never be too long.

CII.

But as she nearer to the forest drew,
A diff'rent object claim'd her gentle care :
Of foliage stript, alone, an alder grew,
Whose naked branches trembled to the air.
From hence shrill cries a beauteous falcon sent,
Which well her bitterness of woe express'd ;
While ever as she shriek'd, with cruel bent,
She fix'd her beak impressiv'e in her breast ;
So that the tide of life, fast flowing round,
Distain'd the wither'd bark, and trickled to the ground.

CIII.

Fair seem'd her form, and fair her aspect seem'd,
As ever eye beheld, or falcon wore ;
Like the pure snow, her silver plumage beam'd,
With mingling ruddy streaks empurpled o'er.
Such was her look, that not the tyger fell,
Who lawless roams the desert wild for prey ;
Nor eagle fierce, that from her airy cell
Wings with destructive aim her rapid way ;
But would have soften'd been to hear her lay,
And, by compassion taught, have felt their rage decay.

CIV.

Mov'd with the plaintive anguish of her tongue,
Her mournful gesture, and her bleeding wound;
The neighb'ring birds from ev'ry thicket throng,
And silent hear, and droop the wing around!
Soon the mild princess through her tender soul
Felt the prevailing force of pity glide;
The voice of sorrow all her senses stole,
As from the tree distinct the falcon cry'd;
"O gentle stranger, some compassion show;
"O heavenly beauty, deign to ease my matchless
woe."

CV.

Quick to the tree the gentle princess flew,
Where still her sad laments the mourner made;
And in the falcon's tongue (which then she knew)
With accent mild and tender look she said:
"Much suffering bird! the fairest of thy kind!
"Whate'er misfortunes thus thy anguish move;
"In me, the daughter of a monarch, find
"A friend; with me a sure protection prove:
"My hands thy wounds shall heal with precious balm,
"And on my breast reclin'd, thy woes shall know a
calm.

"But

CVI.

"But why thy breast this boundless sorrow fills,
"Which fighting echo wafts the woods around?
"Why from thy breast the crimson drop distils,
"That mars the verdure of the blasted ground?
"If death has robb'd thee of thy slaughter'd mate,
"For whom despairing, comfortless you show;
"Or if some envious shaft with cruel fate
"Has pierc'd thy bosom with a deadly blow?
"Oh quick the cause reveal!—for never yet
"On one of feather'd kind so was my fancy set!"

CVII.

Scarce had she spoke, when from the lifeless spray,
Where perch'd the falcon did her griefs repeat,
The fluttering mourner fell, and panting lay,
As pleas'd to die beneath the princess' feet.
Soon from the earth the bird her pity rais'd,
And in her lap with fond indulgence plac'd;
Then call'd her maids, who on the action gaz'd,
And bound its wounds and tenderly embrac'd:
Till by her hands reviv'd the falcon woke,
Grateful beheld the fair, and faintly thus bespoke.

CVIII.

"O blest compassion! heav'n-descended child!
"Whose power is best perceiv'd in noblest hearts;
E 3 "Who,

- " Who, dress'd in smiles of patience, meekly mild,
 " To want, relief ; to mis'ry, ease imparts :
 " By thee inspir'd—this heavenly maid has felt
 " A pain for sorrows to herself unknown ;
 " With kind humility has comfort dealt
 " To me, amidst the wilds of nature thrown.
 " For which may guardian heav'n her virtues shield
 " From all the poison'd arts, that drove me to the field !

CIX.

- " Yet though reflection should convey a dart
 " With every word to wing my fleeting life ;
 " The story of my woe shall I impart
 " At thy command, and bear the cruel strife :
 " So may the sad relation be believ'd,
 " Which from experience deeply wounded flows,
 " That thy superior virtue, undeceiv'd,
 " May scorn the semblance faithless manhood
 shows,
 " Their vows, their sighs, and all the flatt'ring arts
 " By which they, skill'd, betray deluded virgin-
 hearts !"

CX.

She ceas'd, as if oppress'd ; nor longer spoke,
 With sad remembrance inward so she pain'd ;

She

She droop'd her head—a flood of anguish broke,
 And scarce her form the signs of life retain'd ;
 While Canace bestow'd a tender tear,
 To see the wretched falcon's hapless state ;
 With kisses oft she fought her griefs to cheer,
 Caress'd her gently, and bewail'd her fate :
 Till kindness does reviving warmth infuse,
 And thus the pensive bird the song of woe renews.

CXI.

“ Where rapid Niefter rolls his noisy wave,
 “ High in a marble cliff that brow'd the flood,
 “ My peaceful birth indulgent nature gave,
 “ Securely there our nest paternal stood :
 “ I liv'd my honour'd parents' dear delight,
 “ Cherish'd with sylvan fruits and choicest grain ;
 “ My youth they form'd, and taught my early flight,
 “ To skim the wood, or circle o'er the plain.
 “ Of all the numerous natives of the sky,
 “ None (so bethought me) seem'd so blest and glad
 as I.

CXII.

“ By fortune favour'd, and by nature free,
 “ Artless I flew where health and pleasure call'd ;

- " No fears alarm'd, no dangers threaten'd me ;
 " No sickness griev'd, nor servitude inthrall'd :
 " Form'd to sincerity, my honest thought
 " No guile imagin'd, as no guile it knew ;
 " Too fond belief !—which future mischiefs wrought,
 " And into woe my heedless footsteps drew :
 " For such the fate of the most candid mind,
 " True honour needs no vows—no vows can falsehood bind.

CXIII.

- " Not distant far, by the descending stream,
 " A tercelet held his wood-enshelter'd nest ;
 " Much of his manners spoke propitious fame,
 " As every virtue had adorn'd his breast.
 " Thus prepossess'd—delighted I beheld,
 " So full of gentle courtesy he seem'd ;
 " All former observation stood excell'd,
 " I saw—admir'd—reflected—and esteem'd :
 " Nor judg'd such carriage with destructive show
 " Conceal'd a darksome well of treason hid below !

CXIV.

- " As where gay flowers in wild profusion rise,
 " Th' embosom'd serpent glides his wily head ;
 " Replete

- " Replete with malice till the time he spies,
 " When unperceiv'd he may his venom shed :
" So with fair semblance of unfelt delight
 " This sly deceiver constant duty paid ;
" Early or late he faithful watch'd my flight,
 " With zeal conducted, and with care obey'd :
" So us'd each artifice my heart to move
" This monster of his kind —this hypocrite in love.

CXV.

- " Yet, while his tenderness my mind surveys,
 " I wonder not that, foolish, I believ'd :
" Yet, when I think on his engaging ways,
 " I scarce know how to call myself deceiv'd :
" So upright to appearance his intent,
 " So far his conduct seem'd from selfish view,
" Dishonour might have wonder'd what it meant,
 " And blush'd to wear a livery so true :
" So fair to light the stately tomb remains,
" That in its loathsome vault the spoils of death contains.

CXVI.

- " Thus for successive years, with humble air,
 " This wretch disloyal holy love profan'd ;
" With constant vows still won my open ear,
 " Till by degrees my yielding mind he gain'd :
 " To

" To hear his plaintive tale beneath the shade,
 " Pleas'd have I oft consum'd the summer's day !
 " Still the fond tale a fresh impressi'on made,
 " And more enamour'd still I went away !
 " With female pride prevailing pity strove,
 " And what was friendship first, now soften'd into
 love.

CXVII.

" Yet in my weakness, virtue still I ey'd ;
 " Nor lost its native purity my heart.
 " Love, though he fetter'd, led me not aside,
 " And virgin chastity maintain'd its part :
 " Though choice inthron'd him in my conscious breast,
 " The best, the dearest of his noble kind ;
 " Lord of my wishes though he reign'd confess'd,
 " His empire still was bounded by the mind
 " In me, unblemish'd honour lent the fire
 " The mutual flame to feed—I thought should ne'er
 expire.

CXVIII.

" Thus won by seeming love, and vain desert,
 " My mind deluded grasp'd its fatal chain :
 " I fear'd no treachery, void of ev'ry art ;
 " Lov'd as I was, I joy'd to love again.

" So,

"So, in the sight of heav'n and conscious day,
"We mutual, one unalter'd passion swore.
"Ne'er did till then the traitor seem so gay,
"Ne'er felt my harmless breast such joy before :
"As when I yielded all my heart as free,
"As simple I believ'd he his had given to me !

CXIX.

"But well this truth-prophetic love has read,
" *A thief and faithful lover think not one.*"
"For soon as he beheld his conquest made,
"Increasing show of transport he put on ;
"Before my feet in seeming trance he lay,
"And though deep silence all his speech suppress'd,
"With false delight I saw his pinions play,
"And his fond eye his happiness confess'd.
"Convinc'd to demonstration I remain'd—
"No mortal lover yet so well the passion feign'd !

CXX.

"Not Paris, who th' Idalian nymph betray'd ;
"Not Troilus, who inconstant Cressida won ;
"Not Jason, who deceiv'd the Colchian maid ;
"Nor Lamech, first who chose two wives for one ;
"Not Adam, who for one his Eden lost,
"With all the sons of his degen'rate race,
"Could

- “ Could equal art with this impostor boast,
“ Or act the counterfeit with such a grace.
“ Such was his specious shadowing of disguise,
“ No woman had escap’d, had she been e’er so wise!

CXXI.

- “ No wonder then, if I, all unadvis’d,
“ Whom no experience caution’d to beware;
“ If unsuspecting I was soon surpris’d,
“ And heedless caught in the delusive snare:
“ If simple, charm’d with love’s attractive show,
“ Its new-born pleasure, and deceitful sweet,
“ My heart unguarded open’d to the foe,
“ And cherish’d in itself the fatal heat;
“ Our thoughts, our pains, our wishes seem’d the
same;
“ New love appear’d to raise a more enduring flame!

CXXII.

- “ Thus twice the sun renew’d the smiling year,
“ And saw our mutual soft endearments crown’d.
“ His sight, my bliss; his safety, all my fear;
“ In him was ev’ry other object drown’d.
“ Had I a sigh he seem’d not to divide?
“ Had he a pain I made not all my own?

“ I held

"I held him more than all the world beside;
"I liv'd—I wish'd to live for him alone!
"Dearer he was to me in ev'ry part,
"Than was the vital stream that circled round my
heart!

CXXIII.

"Near the lone ruins of a wasted tow'r,
"Encompas'd by the river's murm'ring fall,
"Oft were we wont to pass the evening-hour,
"Safe in the shelter of the ivy'd wall:
"There was our meeting fix'd that hapless day,
"Happy, whose light these eyes had never seen,
"Slow pass'd to me the tedious time away,
"Till the deep shadows darken'd half the green;
"Impatient I observ'd the night's increase,
"And ere th' appointed time I wing'd me to the
place.

CXXIV.

"There I the traitor found, who pensive stood,
"Perch'd on a turret, as to mark my flight:
"Sad seem'd his aspect; drooping was his mood;
"Ne'er had I seen him in such heavy plight.
"Trembling, I ask'd the cause; but ask'd in vain,
"Foreboding; silence gave me nought to know.
"I press

" I press him to reply, Whence rose his pain ?

" His eyes responsive only told his woe :

" Till with a forc'd constraint, and piercing look,

" His feeble voice he rais'd ; and, thus prepar'd, he spoke.

CXXV.

' Hard is the lot the bolder male attends,

' Where dangers threat by honour forc'd to go ;

' While nature kind your softer sex defends,

' And guardian-beauty shields from ev'ry blow.

' Love, weeping love, can tell with what regret

' Reluctant I obey the tyrant-guide ;

' How much I wail the rigour of my fate,

' That tears me, gentle charmer, from thy side.

' Judge thou the strife, and with impartial aim,

' Save (if thou canst) my peace, or vindicate my fame.'

CXXVI.

" He ceas'd—unusual horror seiz'd my breast,

" A mix'd confusion, never felt before :

" Scarce my dim eye the rising grief repress'd:

" I lov'd his safety, but his honour more.

" When death prevailing rends the tortur'd heart,

" And hovers o'er the sight his dreadful shade,

" Such

- “ Such at that instant was my speechless smart ;
“ Such was the anguish on my senses prey’d.
“ Firm as I could I yet withheld a cry,
“ And thoughtful thus I made, determin’d, my reply.

CXXVII.

- ‘ Though love can ill this sudden shock sustain,
‘ And never love as yet exceeded mine !
‘ Yet since thy glory calls thee from the plain,
‘ Content I sacrifice my will to thine.
‘ Complaints are vain ;—where fame invites thee, go :
‘ Yet for my sake, amidst the warrior strife,
‘ Heav’n from thy head avert each pointed blow,
‘ And with thy safety bring me more than life !
‘ For this each morning orison shall rise ;
‘ For this each ev’ning hymn invoke the guardian
skies.

CXXVIII.

- ‘ Yet though harsh fate for years prolong thy stay,
‘ Love constant shall supply my faithful flame.
‘ Then, as if lost but the preceding day,
‘ Still wilt thou find my tenderness the same.
‘ When the pure soul a chaste affection binds,
‘ Nor time, nor death the union can impair ;
‘ Heav’n

- ' Heav'n pleas'd surveys the sympathy of minds,
 ' That, like itself, enkindles brightly fair.
 ' Fly then to conquest—fortune be thy guide!
 ' Of this assur'd, no pow'r our faith shall e'er divide.'

CXXIX.

- " What need I, princess fair, describe his shows,
 " His varied action, and his fond discourse?
 " His vows repeated, and dissembled woes?
 " *Who could speak better? Who could practise worse?*
 " Such was his agony—so deep his cries;
 " Such all the shapes of his experienc'd art;
 " That more instructed thought, and wiser eyes,
 " Perhaps had seen he over-did his part.
 " But innocence my weaker judgment bound:
 " *None treason well can know, but who has treason*
found.

CXXX.

- " Doleful we parted on the gloom of night,
 " With weary wing my wind-rock'd nest I fought;
 " He vig'rous southward urg'd his rapid flight,
 " With new direction, and inconstant thought.
 " Well had he learn'd this maxim of mankind,
 " That no restraint the appetite could cool:
 " That

"That the soft passion languishes confin'd;
"But when directed, free by beauty's rule,
"(As fancy leads) exerts a nobler aim;
"With novelty supplies the still reviving flame!

CXXXI.

"Like as the foolish bird, who wild incag'd,
"(Though kind you tend him, and though fond you
feed)
"Yet bears his loss of liberty enrag'd,
"Nor all your gentle usage deigns to heed:
"Were you to line his prison-bars with silk,
"Disdainful shall he tear the trophies up;
"Were you to mix his mews of honey'd milk,
"He loaths the dainties, and he spurns the cup.
"But give him leave—the libertine shall rove,
"To feed on vilest worms, a vagrant in the grove.

CXXXII.

"'Twas so this tercelet, whom I once esteem'd
"A miracle of constancy and truth,
"(Such as in virtue counterfeit he seem'd
"With all the splendour of unblemish'd youth!)
"Fir'd by no prospect of superior fame,
"But led by vain desire of wanton change,

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"He

- " He shunn'd my sight, forgot his ancient flame,
 " In search of lawless pleasure wild to range.
 " A wretched kite had struck his fickle eye ;
 " A kite ! the coarsest bird that wings the midway sky !

CXXXIII.

- " So spoke report — nor I the tale believ'd,
 " So much my heart was wedded to its foe ;
 " Till by my own enquiry undeceiv'd,
 " My error late I found, I found it so !
 " Then first I knew, not love the passion bred,
 " Whose semblance fair this hypocrite express'd ;
 " But phantasy the idle vapour fed,
 " A meteor vain of gallantry at best.
 " A real tenderness can ne'er decline ;
 " Of genuine virtue still is constancy the sign.

CXXXIV.

- " Thus now this kite my wanderer enjoys,
 " Forgetful of his violated vows ;
 " More artful she, perhaps, her pow'r employs,
 " To seize the kind occasions love allows ;
 " To try if real be the wooer's pain,
 " By wiles that ev'n his artifice may blind ;
 " To practise coyness, and to act disdain,
 " Arts never suited to my plainer mind ;
 " Whose

" Whose innocence alone supports its grief,
 " Till heav'n shall end my woe, or timely send re-
 lief !"

CXXXV.

More had she spoke, but as she thus bewail'd,
 Prevailing anguish gain'd the dubious sway ;
 Short grew her breath ; her little spirits fail'd,
 And in the princess' lap she dy'd away !
 Mov'd at the sight, the nymphs with busy care,
 To give the mourner and their mistress ease ;
 Who safe conveys her from the dang'rous air,
 And homeward with a gentle pace conveys ;
 Where in her own apartment safely plac'd,
 The wounded bird she leaves, its just repose to taste.

CXXXVI.

Next Canace humane her thought bestows,
 From ev'ry potent herb and root to choose
 Ingredients bland, the med'cine to compose,
 And in the sores the balm of health infuse :
 Recov'ring soon, beneath her watchful eye
 The gentle bird a fairer face assumes,
 Her wounds reclose, she shews external joy,
 And with new life her varied plumage blooms.
 Grateful, her fair deliv'rer is confess'd,
 She sips her rosy lip, and flutters round her breast !

CXXXVII.

Yet but imperfect pleasure she reveal'd,
 A cloud of anguish darken'd still her mien;
 In vain with fond endeavour she conceal'd
 The melancholy grief that reign'd within:
 With friendly zeal the gen'rous princess strove
 To cure this deeper wound which sorrow made,
 To cool the fever of consuming love,
 Which slowly wasting on her quiet prey'd:
 And fought, by reason calm, and mild discourse,
 To mitigate the deep disease's rooted force.

CXXXVIII.

Cloſe by her fair alcove's projected ſide,
 She for the fav'rite bird a mew prepares;
 Adorn'd with all the elegance of pride;
 Of gold the wires, of gold the fretted bars:
 In gold the crystal ewer ſhe encas'd,
 A figur'd vaſe of gold contain'd her food;
 Her cage around with golden foliage grac'd,
 Of gold the poliſh'd perch on which ſhe ſtood;
 Hung o'er a canopy of velvet-blue,
 The emblem ſweet of hope, and perfeverance true!

CXXXIX.

Full in a rich entablature oppos'd,
 Depicted was there many a faithleſs fowl;

There

There in their proper colours stood disclos'd
 The fickle tercelet, and the treach'rous owl.
 The caitiff cuckoo flew attended there,
 Whom all the feather'd tribes avoid with scorn;
 Nor fail'd the tell-tale daw, or prattling stare
 The enigmatic portrait to adorn:
 High in the centre was the jay espy'd,
 Who ap'd their sev'ral airs—well practis'd to deride.

CXL.

Here shall we leave, how, by Camballo's care,
 Return'd the falcon with repentant wing;
 Nor yet the mirror's wondrous pow'rs declare;
 Nor the sword's virtues to restore the king:
 Nor of Cambuscan's conquests yet discourse;
 Whence gain'd Algarfise Thedora to wife,
 Great peril 'scaping through the brazen horse:
 These we defer—to tell Camballo's strife,
 And how three mighty brethren he surpass'd;
 Then where we first began, shall we conclude at last.

* *Cetera multa desiderantur.*

* What follows is continued by Mr. Ogle, from the fourth book of Spenser's Fairy Queen.

CXLI.

WIDE spread the fame of Canace the fair,
 Held of her sex most learned in her days;
 Her ring disclosing ev'ry science rare,
 And ev'ry secret work of nature's ways.
 The voice of beasts and birds, or wild, or tame,
 The pow'r of herbs and plants she fully knew:
 But what augmented more her other fame,
 (Though dark events lay open to her view)
 She modest was in all her deeds and words;
 And wondrous chaste of life, though lov'd of knights
 and lords.

CXLII.

Her many a lord, and many a knight her lov'd;
 But she to none of them her liking lent;
 Nor ever was with fond affection mov'd;
 No single look once out of order went;
 So well her thoughts all lawless passions rul'd,
 For love of honour, or for dread of blame;
 And, or extinguish'd quite, or duly cool'd,
 She smother'd, or she never felt the flame:

Her

Her eyes like wary centinels well stay'd,
Still watch'd on ev'ry side, of secret foes afraid.

CXLIII.

So much the rather, as she shunn'd to love,
So much the rather, she to love was fought;
What fail'd not much unquiet strife to move,
And 'midst her suitors frequent contests wrought.
That oft for her in bloody arms they fight,
Encount'ring danger for the thankless maid;
Whom, when Camballo (wise and valiant knight!)
Perceiv'd, he nor could temper nor dissuade;
From ills he could not help, he cast to raise,
And turn both him and her to honour and to
praise.

CXLIV.

One day that met this troop of warlike merit,
Amongst them all he made this fix'd decree;
(All men of passion, and all men of spirit;
The harder so to make them well agree :)
" Be this the hour, to fix my sister's choice;
" Be of the crowd that to her bed pretend,
" Three chose, the stoutest call'd by common voice,
" The stoutest of the three the strife shall end.

"Then each with me shall combat for her sake ;

"The victor of them all our Canace shall take."

CXLV.

Bold was the challenge, as himself was bold,

With courage full of daring and emprise,

Approv'd in acts too num'rous to be told,

Whence lasting honours to his mem'ry rise.

But what secur'd him of the wish'd event,

Whence, though full brave, some confidence might
spring,

Was the sure aid his royal sister lent,

The influence of her rarely-gifted ring ;

That 'mongst the many virtues which we read,

Had pow'r to staunch all wounds that mortally did bleed.

CXLVI.

So was that ring's great virtue known to all ;

That dread of this, and his redoubted might,

Did all that youthly rout so much appall,

That none of them durst undertake the fight.

More wise they ween'd to make of love a play,

Than life to hazard for fair lady's grace ;

While yet uncertain (should they gain the day)

They in her fight might hope the foremost place.

Though

Though for her sake they all that peril ran,
Who could be sure of her, or think himself the man?

CXLVII.

Among the lovers were three brethren bold—

Three bolder brethren never yet were born!
Born of one mother, in one happy mould;
Born at one burthen, in one happy morn.

Thrice happy morn, thrice happy mother, hail!

That brought three such, three such not to be
found;

Three males united as one single male!

The first was Priamondo, far renown'd;
Nor less the second, Diamondo nam'd;
With Triamondo last, yet equally as fam'd.

CXLVIII.

Stout Priamondo, not so strong to strike;

Strong Diamondo, not so stout a knight;

But Priamondo, stout and strong alike.

On horse would Triamondo choose to fight;

Felt Priamondo best on foot his force,

And so delighted to maintain his ground;

To Diamondo equal foot or horse.

With curtax deep would Diamondo wound;

And

And Triamondo handled spear and shield;
 But curtax, shield and spear would Priamondo wield.

CXLIX.

These brothers lov'd each other wondrous well,
 And by such firm affection were ally'd,
 As if one soul might in three bosoms dwell,
 And in three equal parts her pow'rs divide.
 Like three fair arms, uniting as they spread,
 That from one root their vital sap derive,
 They crown their mother with one tow'ring head;
 And, like the root that bids them bloom and thrive,
 Such was their mother! at one happy birth
 Three sons producing, three, the noblest sons of
 earth!

CL.

Of secret things their mother had the skill,
 Knew nature's laws; a nymph of fairy kind:
 Hence by her art could model to her will,
 And to her use each living creature bind.
 Thereto she was right fair to mortal eye,
 Lift she to mortal eye to show how fair;
 Tempting to touch, and charming to descry;
 Her stature goodly, delicate her air.

But

But she, as wont the nymphs of sylvan race,
In forests spent her days, and lov'd in wilds to chase.

CLI.

There on a day, a noble youthly knight,
Adventures seeking in the savage wood,
By great good fortune got of her the sight,
As she sat careless by a crystal flood:
And on her unawares he lay'd his hand,
Combing her locks, her head to new-array;
In vain she strove his ardour to withstand;
The too intemp'rate youth would have his way.
Oppressing her by force (as bards have told)
Three lovely sons he got, that prov'd three champions
bold.

CLII.

These long she foster'd in the lonely wood,
Till to the ripeness of man's state they grew,
Then showing forth signs of their father's blood;
Arms first they love, adventures then pursue.
Adventures, where they knew to seek, they fought,
Which, for their safety, pain'd their mother's mind;
For though their pow'rs they prov'd, and wonders
wrought,
Yet he that seeks mischance, mischance may find.

For

For he that danger rather courts than shuns,
The greater is his heart, the greater hazard runs.

CLIII.

For this she wish'd the number of their days
To know, and to enlarge with long extent;
By wondrous skill, through subterraneous ways,
Down to the mansion of the Fates she went:
Down to the bottom of the deep abyfs,
Far under ground she went to realms of night,
Where Demogorgon sits in gloomy blifs,
Far from the eye of heav'n, or view of light,
And rules the hideous chaos; there she hies,
The Fates to try; where hid their dreadful dwelling
lies.

CLIV.

She found them there, all seated in a round;
Full in the midst the direful distaff stands;
Where, drawing out the lines of life, she found
The fatal sisters, with unweary'd hands.
Sad Clotho held the rock; the vital twine
With pain by grielly Lachesis was spun;
But ah! how soon was all their fair design,
How soon, by cruel Atropos undone!

With

With steel accurst she cut the twift in twain :
Most wretched man, whose days depend on threads so
vain !

CLV.

Ent'ring she bow'd, and bending fate to rest ;
Their labour then survey'd with anxious grace :
And comprehending soon, the Fates address'd,
Trembling in heart, and looking pale in face.
To tell her cause of coming she began—
To whom fierce Atropos ; “ Intruder bold !
“ That search the secrets of the life of man ;
“ That dare from mortal what is hid behold :
“ Well worthy thou to be of Jove accurst,
“ And shorten'd of their twine thy sons in secret
nurst.”

CLVI.

Whereat she, sore afraid, the fates besought
Pardon to grant, and rigour to abate,
And pray'd to see how strong their twine was wrought,
And know the utmost measure of their date.
This Clotho grants ; so destiny ordain'd ;
And gives her to inspect the fated line :
The mother to the soul was inly pain'd,
Nor could forbear to murmur and repine ;

Spun

Spun were their threads, she thought, as spiders spin,
As thin as webs they seem'd, and yet as short as thin.

CLVII.

For longer measure, and for stronger thread,

She strait began the sisters to engage ;

That so their lives might be prolong'd (she said) :

But Lachesis as soon began to rage.

“ Deem you alike, fond dame (the goddess cry'd),

“ Alike, of human things, and things divine?

“ That alter'd they may be ? (oh mortal pride !)

“ And chang'd at pleasure, for those sons of thine ?

“ Not so ; for what the destinies decree,

“ Not all the gods can force, nor Jove himself can
free.”

CLVIII.

‘ If then the term of life (the nymph rejoin'd)

‘ Can neither be or lessen'd or enlarg'd ;

‘ Grant this (this grant will ease a mother's mind)

‘ With either's soul be either's body charg'd.

‘ So when you doom the eldest of the three,

‘ (Whose life I see is shortest) pass his soul ;

‘ Transfer it to the second in degree ;

‘ And let the third and last possess the whole.

‘ Thus each in other shall his life prolong,

‘ In life of other, each shall thus be trebly strong.’

The

CLIX.

The careful sisters granted her request ;
With full-contented mind the nymph departs.
Return'd, she meets her sons in armour drest,
Not to her wish, nor knew they of her arts.
From them conceal'd she what the Fates design'd,
And how their lives were lengthen'd fear'd to
tell ;
Yet oft as fair occasion she could find,
She bids son trust to son, whate'er befel.
" Let brother on his brother's safety wait,
" Give love for love, my boys, whate'er your future
fate."

CLX.

And firm in friendship liv'd they all their days,
Rash discord never ent'ring either mind ;
Which added much to all their other praise,
And now in love of Canace they join'd.
As by affection natural 'twas agreed,
Each could not but approve what each approv'd ;
And though same likings sure averfions breed ;
Here lov'd they more, because alike they lov'd.
Hence the dire conflict grew including all,
(As oft) great matter growing from beginning small.
O ! why

CLXI.

O! why do wretched men so much desire
 To draw their days to the remotest date?
 Why do not rather wish them to expire,
 Knowing the certain mis'ry of their state?
 Toss'd like the vessel on the surging wave,
 What ills await them, threat'ning to devour!
 One danger from the cradle to the grave
 Attends; for death attends them ev'ry hour!
 And who most happy seems, and least complains,
 Is yet as near his end as he that suffers pains!

CLXII.

For this I hold the nymph more fond than sage,
 Her children's life thus seeking to prolong;
 To lengthen mis'ry, she would lengthen age:
 But she that means the right, can act no wrong.
 And happy each in other breath'd the three,
 Of other each approving and approv'd;
 So courteous each with other to agree,
 It made them more esteem'd of friends they lov'd;
 And each with other so for valour priz'd,
 It made them dreaded more of foes whom they despis'd.

CLXIII.

These three that hardy challenge took in hand,
 With great Camballo to maintain the fight;

The

The day was set, that all might understand,
And pledges pawn'd, as claim'd the martial rite.
That day (and ne'er was day of equal dread
Known, or to those before, or those since born!)
Soon as the face of heav'n was streak'd with red,
These warlike champions hail the rising morn;
And, glorious as the sun, in armour shine,
Assembling in the field, the challenge to define.

CLXIV.

The field with lifts was all around inclos'd,
To bar the press of people far away;
And at one side six judges were dispos'd,
To view and deem the deeds of arms that day.
Fresh in array, and beautiful to fight,
Fair Canace adorn'd a stately stage,
Rais'd opposite; the fortune of the fight
Engag'd to see: her beauty was the gage;
There to be seen, as his most worthy wife
Who purchas'd her full fair, at venture of his life.

CLXV.

Camballo enter'd first the list'd space,
With stately step, that scorn'd the pow'r of chance;
As sure of conquest, fearless was his face:
As fearless, though less sure, the three advance.

Their 'scutcheons richly gilt, and, streaming high,
 Their banners, that on day reflected day.
 Thrice marching round the list, they charm'd the eye,
 Such was their manly port, and brave array.
 Thrice bow'd they lowly to the noble maid,
 The while the trumpets shrill, and loud the clarions
 play'd.

CLXVI.

Advanc'd the challenger with hardy stride,
 All arm'd to point, his challenge to maintain;
 Him Priamondo met with equal pride,
 To point all arm'd, to take it in disdain.
 A trumpet blew: strait closing hand to hand,
 With furious force and fell intent they met,
 Careless of peril in the furious stand;
 Life they expos'd, as life had been a debt:
 A debt so deeply 'gag'd, that they esteem'd
 'Twas folly now to spare, what could not be re-
 deem'd.

CLXVII.

Well practis'd Priamondo was in fight,
 And great his skill in use of spear and shield.
 Nor less approv'd Camballo's martial might,
 Nor less his skill or shield or spear to wield.

'Twas

'Twas hard to guess which was the hardier foe ;
 For equal ev'ry blow on either side,
 And either side sent death at ev'ry blow :
 It seem'd that chance, not merit, must decide.
 Each eyes the other with such watchful care,
 That short falls ev'ry blow, or vainly glides in air.

CLXVIII.

Yet one of many with unlucky glance
 (Of many one by Priamondo sent)
 Took place, directed less by aim than chance,
 And passing through Camballo's shoulder went.
 It went; his shield it forc'd him to forego.
 Much was he griev'd, and rag'd with high disdain :
 Yet from the wound no blood he felt to flow,
 But wondrous pain ; his courage rose with pain ;
 That urg'd his haughty soul to vengeance fell.
 Smart daunts not mighty hearts, but makes them
 more to swell.

CLXIX.

With that, he bade his poignant javelin fly
 Full at his foe, and close beneath his shield ;
 It enter'd through his mail, and pierc'd his thigh ;
 The blood gush'd forth, and stain'd the grassy
 field.

With double force it flew, and reach'd the knight;
 Much was the knight incumber'd with the wound;
 To stand unable, or erect his height,
 For here and there he reel'd along the ground.
 So as the sapless oak, through age declin'd,
 Submits to ev'ry blast, and bends to ev'ry wind.

CLXX.

Soon as Camballo his condition spy'd,
 Full at the spear he caught with all his might,
 Meaning to draw, or thrust from side to side,
 And so at one attempt conclude the fight.
 Deep was the point infix'd, and hard he drew;
 Hard though he drew, still back the foe reclin'd:
 Freed from the weapon, on the knight he flew,
 (Broke was the staff, the head was left behind.)
 At which the hero, more enrag'd than tam'd,
 Re-charging him afresh, thus scornfully exclaim'd.

CLXXI.

"Here, take the meed of thy mischallenge, take!
 "Thus long have I permitted thee to live;
 "Not for thine own, but for thy sister's sake:
 "A debt I might forbear, but not forgive."
 The wicked weapon heard the wrathful vow,
 And pass'd to second his vindictive ire,

His

His beaver pierc'd, and shiver'd on his brow,
 That with the force it forc'd him to retire,
 Then broke ; half quiv'ring in his head-piece stood,
 And half the owner held, and curs'd the treach'rous
 wood.

CLXXII.

The sudden shock with rage Camballo bore ;
 And, where it struck, from forth his beaver drew
 The shorten'd spear, that pain'd him as he tore :
 He drew, and back at Priamondo threw.
 The faithless weapon found a ready way
 To pierce his gorget where his neck was bare ;
 Where lies the pipe, commission'd to convey
 Fresh to the lab'ring breast the vital air.
 Thence streams of purple blood, the last of life,
 Dismiss his weary soul, and end the doubtful strife.

CLXXIII.

His weary soul, from earthly bondage freed,
 Nor fled to heav'n, where some say spirits fly ;
 Nor vanish'd into air, as others plead ;
 Nor, chang'd into a star, adorn'd the sky ;
 Nor sought direct (a solitary shade)
 In Pluto's gloomy realm eternal rest :

But through traduction (as his mother pray'd)
 Pass'd instantaneous to his brother's breast:
 His brother next in order that surviv'd,
 In whom he liv'd anew, of former life depriv'd.

CLXXIV.

He, when he spy'd him breathless on the field,
 Was touch'd with sorrow for his brother's fate;
 Way to his sorrow yet he scorn'd to yield,
 But rather rous'd to vengeance and to hate.
 Nor this the time to wail, or to condole;—
 But fierce he rushes to renew the fight;
 Through secret impulse of his gen'rous soul,
 As in reversion of his brother's right:
 And, challenging the virgin as his due,
 The foe was soon address'd; the trumpets freshly blew.

CLXXV.

With that, together both so fiercely clos'd,
 As limb from limb each other meant to rend;
 Foot fix'd to foot, and hand to hand oppos'd,
 Nor plate nor mail the hideous show'r defend.
 So deadlily they dealt their axes round,
 Riv'd was the plate, and shatter'd was the mail;
 Pain felt the one, the other dy'd the ground,
 Fire flash'd from ev'ry blow, trail after trail;

As

As fast as lightning after thunder flies :
That fill'd the crowded list with terror and surprife.

CLXXVI.

As when two tigers, prick'd with hungry rage,
Chance in the chace to meet the wish'd-for spoil,
On which they hope their famine to assuage,
And gain a feastful harvest of their toil :
To make the just partition both refuse,
And both contest the fortune of the day :
Hence strife-full broil and cruel fight ensues,
While neither lets the other touch the prey ;
And either scorns with other to partake :
So strove these warlike knights, for this fair lady's
fake.

CLXXVII.

Full many a blow, and mortally design'd,
Was interchang'd ; yet short fell ev'ry blow ;
For they were all so warded or declin'd,
That life in each stood fearless of her foe.
Till Diamondo, scorning long delay
Of wav'ring fortune, fix'd to neither side,
Resolv'd to end the doubt at one essay,
And at one aim the battle to decide ;

"Take this for Priamondo!" (fierce he spoke)
And heav'd his murd'rous axe, and gave a vengeful
stroke.

CLXXVIII.

The vengeful stroke had finish'd soon the strife,
Sped, as was meant, so deadly was it meant!
Soon had it from the body forc'd the life;
But this Camballo's better fates prevent.
He mark'd him as he rais'd and lower'd his hand,
And judg'd the blow would fall with mighty sway,
So swerv'd, as it arriv'd, and slipp'd his stand,
And sudden to its fell intent gave way.
Missing the mark, to which his eye was bound,
Nigh fell'd him his right arm, his right foot plough'd
the ground.

CLXXIX.

As when a vulture, greedy of his prey,
By hunger prest, and hunger heart can lend!
Strikes at a heron, in th' ethereal way,
On whom his feather'd forces downward bend;
Nought seems that can defend her from her foe:
Herself the fowl defends with wary care;
She spies him as he stoops, eludes the blow,
And makes him spend his wings in empty air;

That

That with his proper weight, deceiv'd in fight,
Nigh to the ground he falls, and scarce recovers
flight.

CLXXX.

The fair occasion when Camballo spy'd,
Full at the knight he drove with all his pow'r ;
Ere for assault or ward he could provide ;
And smote him with his axe in luckless hour.
With dire dexterity the stroke was sped,
Then as recover'd, from his stoop, the foe ;
And from his shoulders off it bore his head :
The headless trunk stood heedless of the blow !
A while it stood, as still respiring breath,
Till feeling life to fail, it fell, and slept in death.

CLXXXI.

Amaz'd were the spectators of the field,
So long erect an headless trunk to see ;
With arms, that, void of life, vain weapons wield,
Unknowing of the Fates' divine decree :
For though one soul from out his body fled,
'Twas that which from his brother he deriv'd ;
And, but that thus dismember'd of the head,
His body would have liv'd, and had reviv'd.

Where,

Where, as his soul no fitting mansion found,
The lifeless corse is left to fall and spread the ground.

CLXXXII.

Yet left not either soul the doubtful strife,
Nor yet retir'd to seat of heav'nly rest ;
But fill'd with double grief, and double life,
Their last lov'd mansion, Triamondo's breast !
Inly he felt a more than mortal smart,
And strait he leap'd into the empty field,
With more than common strength, or common heart ;
And menac'd with his spear, and shook his shield.
Thus brave Camballo bravely he address'd,
Who fac'd the foe, and soon the fight was closely
press'd.

CLXXXIII.

Well might you wonder how that noble knight
Was able to sustain wound after wound ;
And what impower'd him to renew the fight,
And how on foot he could maintain his ground.
Yet had you then him forth advancing seen,
As fierce he seem'd, as fresh the field to take,
As had he been new-form'd, new-soul'd had been ;
The semblance of the new-recruited snake,
That,

That, soon as spring dispels the wintry cold,
 Throws off his ragged skin, and shines in scales of
 gold.

CLXXXIV.

'Twas all through virtue of the ring he wore,
 Whence wounded not a single drop he bled;
 His weaken'd strength her working pow'rs restore,
 The stone therein incas'd such influence shed.
 Else how could one of equal might with most,
 With most of equal might, yet still but one,
 Before so many no less mighty boast;
 And go the road to honour he had gone?
 Or think to match three such in equal fight?
 Three such, as match'd an host; an host in either
 knight!

CLXXXV.

Yet this in Triamondo rais'd no dread,
 Nor yet of glorious vict'ry he despair'd;
 But closing him, well arm'd from foot to head,
 What man could do, he did; could dare, he dar'd.
 Thick pour'd his blows, as hailstones from the sky,
 On ev'ry side he struck, hew'd, urg'd, and press'd;
 All doubt or could he stand, or would he fly:
 So fast the foe his iron axe address'd,

That

That sparks of fire from ev'ry stroke ensue,
As fast as from the rock the sprays of briny dew.

CLXXXVI.

Much was Camballo daunted with the blows,
So thick they fell, so forcibly were sent,
Constrain'd (to such a height his fury rose)
Back to retire, and somewhat to relent.
Safer he judg'd to ward than to withstand
The rage of passion, rising in its course;
He waits his shorter breath, and lighter hand,
Then fresh assails him with superior force:
That caus'd the foe, abated of his heat,
Fast forward as he press'd, now backward to retreat.

CLXXXVII.

As when the tide, from ocean newly sped,
Flows up the Shenan with contrary course;
O'er-rules the stream, in his own wat'ry bed,
And makes him seem to have an adverse source:
Back tow'rds his spring the current re-ascends,
And borders lately pass'd again surveys;
But when again the flood its vigour spends,
Then back his borrow'd waters he repays,
And sends the sea his own with double gain,
And tribute, with his own, as sov'reign of the main.

Various

CLXXXVIII.

Various as these, the tides of battle flow,
With diverse fortune doubtful to be deem'd ;
Now this the better had, now had his foe ;
Then one half vanquish'd, then the other seem'd.
Yet victor each himself in valour thought,
And held his rival dying, if not dead ;
Felt many a pang Camballo, while they fought,
And blood abundant Triamondo shed ;
That with the wasting of his vital flood,
Faintly he breath'd at heart, on foot he feebly stood.

CLXXXIX.

Camballo stronger still and greater grew,
Nor felt his blood to waste, nor pow'rs to fail ;
From wounds new made he gather'd vigour new,
So much the virtues of the ring prevail.
Like as the tree, by blights or years,
Though wither'd to the trunk it droops the head,
Reviv'd, when prun'd with careful skill, appears,
And joys again to flourish and to spread ;
New fruit producing from the husband's toil,
As fresh as when it first was planted in the soil.

CXC.

Through like advantage in his strength he rose,
And smote with wondrous force the adverse knight,
There,

There, where the seams the jointed hauberk close,
 That down he fell, as dead to human sight.
 Dead yet he was not; yet he suffer'd death;
 Death sure as suffers aught of mortal state;
 Felt the last struggle of expiring breath,
 And pay'd a life at the demand of fate :
 For strait one soul from out his body flies,
 From human mis'ry freed, and seeks its native skies.

CXCI.

Meantime, while all that spy'd him deem'd him dead,
 For visible to all he seem'd to die,
 As rising from a dream he rear'd his head,
 And sudden on his foe began to fly.
 At so uncouth a sight, the foe amaz'd
 Lost pow'r of speech, nor utterance could afford;
 Unmov'd, as had he seen a ghost, he gaz'd,
 And slow of action held his idle sword :
 Till struck full oft by his impetuous arm,
 To strike he was constrain'd, to save himself from
 harm.

CXCII.

Yet from that hour more warily he fought,
 In fear the Stygian gods to unbefriend;
 As one to save himself that rather fought,
 Than fast pursu'd another to offend;

Nor

Nor life, nor labour chose to spend in vain.

When Triamondo found his cooler play,
He judg'd it follow'd or from fear or pain,
Ill able to support the closing fray;
Or that the knight could ill on foot endure,
A sign that must to him the vict'ry soon assure.

CXCIII.

Joy'd to the soul, on high he rais'd his hand,
In mind to give the last decisive blow;
The foe to end, or fear'd he to withstand,
Or dar'd he to withstand, to end the foe.
Camballo mark'd him, not inclin'd to yield,
And nothing slow to save his threaten'd head;
His sword he drew, and pass'd his op'ning shield,
Slight was the op'ning, slight the pass was sped:
He struck him, as to strike his hand he rear'd;
Beneath his arm it went, and at his back appear'd.

CXCIV.

Yet Triamondo's axe pursued its way,
And fell full heavy on Camballo's crest.
The hero in a swooning absence lay;
An hideous wound was on his head imprest.
His shield with brims of brass was plated round,
And there it found a rest, nor farther sped;

Else

Else had the knight been cleav'd, and spread the
ground,

Down to the breast dissever'd from the head.
So both at once fell breathless on the field,
And each to other seem'd the vict'ry there to yield.

CXCv.

The crowd conclude the fight was at an end ;
The marshals of the field and judges rose ;
Wail'd Canace her brother as her friend ;
They rend the trophies, and the lists they close :
Nought rested but to speak their fun'ral praise ;
Ascertain'd now by death the doubtful strife ;
When, lo ! at once their living forms they raise,
One from his ring ; one from his treble life ;
And both together rising (wondrous fight !)
Fresh, other each assail'd, and fierce renew'd the
fight.

CXCvI.

Each claiming then the other as his prize,
Begun, as had the fight but then begun ;
Alike, strokes, wounds, shields, weapons, they despise,
And danger rather try to find than shun.
Death fear'd they not, nor yet for life they car'd,
Life to let out alike, or death let in.

For

For death they valu'd not, nor life they spar'd,
Or who was to be won, or who to win :
More to be kill'd desirous, than to kill ;
To both life seem'd a load, and safety seem'd an ill.

CXCVII.

While thus the battle hung, a doubtful scale ;
Unsure to whom the balance would decline,
Sad ev'ry heart, and ev'ry face grew pale,
The close of all unwilling to divine ;
All suddenly a clamorous noise they heard,
That seem'd some perilous tumult to portend ;
As something strange at near approach appear'd,
And caus'd the crowd the vault of heav'n to rend,
With cries of women, and alarms of boys,
Such as the troubled theatre full oft annoys.

CXCVIII.

Each champion heard the clamour from afar,
But what it brought not sudden could devise ;
When, lo ! they spy'd, fair seated on a car,
A maid, that could not fail to touch their eyes.
Fast as a whirlwind drives, she drives along,
And lovely was the virgin to behold :
Yet faster way she made amidst the throng,
For that her car was all adorn'd with gold ;

It seem'd as for some Persian monarch plann'd,
With various gems enrich'd, and show'd a master
hand.

CXCIX.

Drawn was her car (what wondrous is to tell)
By two grim lions, subject to command;
And though they look'd in fierceness to excel
Their savage kind, yet tame they bore her hand.
Erect on foot, high rais'd the damsel stood,
And more than human seem'd to human sight;
Bright as the dame that bore her in the wood,
She shone (and either shone as angel bright):
But with her beauty bounty might compare,
Which of the two might claim the greater share.

CC.

The fair was daughter to th' enamour'd knight,
Who once again oppress'd the sylvan maid;
Long had he watch'd to gain the pleasing sight,
Till unawares he caught her in the shade.
In magic lore the mother deeply skill'd,
Her child in all her subtle arts improv'd;
And now she came, with kind affection fill'd,
To aid her brother, whom she dearly lov'd.

In haste she came to pacify the strife,
For bad the loss or gain, where gain or loss is life.

CCI.

Her as the crowd press'd nearer to behold,
Less tractable her ireful leaders grew;
Numbers they drove before, as sheep to fold,
And numbers roll'd in dust, for haste o'erthrew;
That in the mix'd confusion of the throng,
For fear of danger, some to distance fly;
For curiosity, some rac'd along;
Some for themselves, and some for others cry;
Some laugh for fancy, some for wonder shout;
And some, that would seem wise, their wonder turn
to doubt.

CCII.

In her right hand a rod of peace she bore,
Around two serpents mutually were wound;
Bound firmly by the tail in lovely lore,
And both were with one olive garland crown'd.
Like to the wand that wields the son of May,
Seals he in sleep the eye, or opes in light;
Draws he from hell the shade, or drives away
The soul from earth; day ministr'ring or night.

H 2

And

And in her other hand she held a vase,
With choice nepenthe fill'd; a juice of sov'reign
grace!

CCIII.

Nepenthe! drink prepar'd by heav'nly art!
By gods devis'd, all sorrow to assuage!
To chase the grief of soul, and gall of heart,
Whence spring fore anguish and contentious rage!
To age it gives sweet peace and quiet rest;
Firm friendship and unalter'd love to youth;
The mind establishes, and cheers the breast;
Reserv'd for such as wisdom court and truth:
Few by the gods to taste it are assign'd;
But all assign'd to taste it, bliss eternal find.

CCIV.

Such men of worth, deriv'd of mortal birth,
As mighty Jove advances to the sky,
Gods for their merit made from sons of earth,
Partake of this ere yet to heav'n they fly.
Secure of joys that will for ever last,
All mem'ry here they drown of human care;
All hope, or fear, of future, or of past,
'Then, unrememb'ring, to the blest repair.

Heroes of old of this were giv'n to taste,
 Ere yet among the gods immortal they were plac'd.

CCV.

Much more of price, and of more gracious pow'r,
 This than the fountain in Ardenna found;
 Of which Rinaldo drank in happy hour,
 As sings the Tuscan poet, far renown'd.
 For had that pow'r to change the bent of mind
 From love to hate, a change of evil choice;
 But this reverse, from hate to love inclin'd;
 Who would not to this virtue yield his voice?
 Hate is of brutes, and what the gods detest;
 But love the gift of heav'n, and glads the human
 breast.

CCVI.

Now close beside the list her leaders stand,
 (And strong inclosing bars the list surround)
 She strikes the bars, that open to her hand,
 Then enter'd, quits her car, and takes the ground.
 "Friendship and peace to all!" (the virgin cry'd)
 "Friendship and peace! the greatest good in life!"
 First to her brother was the wish apply'd,
 Whom, sorely griev'd, she found in bloody strife;

H 3

Last,

Last, to the foe, whose warlike air and grace,
Then, secret touch'd her soul, and dy'd her consci-
ous face.

CCVII.

Both slightly bow'd, (for small was their delight,
As then, to entertain the lovely maid)
Then turn'd them to the battle: at the fight,
Between them on the field herself she laid.
With double hopes disturb'd, and double fears,
Nought that could move the reconciler spares,
With sighs now intermixing soft'ning tears,
And pow'rful reasons adding now to pray'rs.
For cordial peace, from horrid war, she fought,
By all they held most dear; by her for whom they
fought.

CCVIII.

But when she found she could not so prevail,
She touch'd them lightly with her pow'rful wand;
Then sudden as the hearts of cowards fail,
Down fall their wrathful swords, and motionless
they stand;
They stand, as men possess'd with panic fright,
Struck with they know not what of dread surprise;
Thus

Thus ere their scatter'd pow'rs they could unite,
Or free their mighty souls from mightier ties,
Her golden bowl, with sweet oblivion fraught,
She reach'd; and, glad for thirst, each drank an
hearty draught!

CCIX.

Soon as they tasted once the juice divine,
Wonder it was the sudden change to see;
From deadly stroke in kind embrace they join,
And hands they plight, no more to disagree;
In amity such enmity to close,
And foe with foe, as friend with friend to yield,
And faithful friends to rise from mortal foes;
This turn of things amaz'd the crowded field;
The crowded field with joy and wonder rise,
One loud applause ensues, re-echoing through the
skies!

CCX.

When gentle Canace this sees and hears,
In haste she from her lofty seat descends;
And soon amidst the combatants appears,
To know if so the cruel conflict ends:
When certain found, all due respect she pay'd,
In manner easy, and in speech polite;

And, for her conduct, praising much the maid,
At Sarra begs her to dispose the night;
And add this other favour to the rest,
The friendship to accept, that firmly she profess'd.

CCXI.

Agreed with true sincerity of heart;
The trumpets sounded, and the judges rose;
With glee and gladsome cheer the crowd depart:
To march together both the champions chose.
And both together chose the maids to ride;
Cambina, prudent umpire of the day,
With sweet affection taking to her side
Fair Canace, as fresh as rose in May.
Thence to Cambuscan's palace they retir'd,
By all applauded each, and each by all admir'd.

CCXII.

In perfect love there many a day they spend;
Camballo with Cambina led his life;
And who but Triamondo could pretend
A rightful claim to Canace as wife?
I pass the joyous feasts, the solemn rites,
Things well to be conceiv'd, though not express'd;
The days of dalliance, and of bliss the nights;
Suffice, that each in each was fully blest.

So join'd by love, and so by friendship bound,
That never since their days were four so happy found.

CCXIII.

It rises oft in life (as here it rose)

That mortal foes to faithful friends may turn ;
And so may faithful friends to mortal foes ;
As reasons temper, or as passions burn.
For oft some dire mistake misleads the will,
As well in hate of foes, as love of friends ;
Hence enmity, that not proceeds of ill,
But of occasion, with th' occasion ends ;
And friendship, which a faint affection breeds
Without regard of good, dies like ill-grounded seeds.

CCXIV.

Meantime the sun his due meridian height
Had gain'd, when neither lost, yet either won ;
While great Cambuscan, who declin'd the fight,
Resign'd to fate the daughter and the son.
The monarch thought fate order'd for the best.
But hold—'tis time to check the forward steed !
Nor should our tale too long delay the rest ;
What yet remains in order may succeed,
When next our turn ; intemperance of tongue
Mine Host will well excuse ; his orator is young.

P R O.

PROLOGUE

TO THE

* FRANKLEIN'S TALE.

FAITH, gentle Squire, thou well, the Franklein
said,

Thy part hast fill'd, and much thy wit display'd;
Such power of words attain'd at such an age

The happiest fruits of eloquence preface:

Soon shall, if right I guess, thy polish'd speech
Perfection's arduous point unrivall'd reach.

Heaven keep thee, gentle youth, in lasting peace!

And may thy virtue with thy years increase!

Oh, might my longing eyes once hope to see
My graceless boy of worth approv'd like thee,

* Fortescue (de L.L. Ang. c. 29) describes a Franklein to be a "Pater familias magnis ditatus possessionibus." He is classed with (but after) the "Miles" and "Armiger," and is distinguished from the "Libere tenentes" and "Valecti;" though, as it should seem, the only real distinction between him and other freeholders consisted in the largeness of his estate.—
TYRWHITT, v. 333.

What

What would I give ! For what, my friends, avail
Huge heaps of wealth, where worth and virtue fail ?
Full many a snub I've given him heretofore,
And fear, I've many a one to give him more :
For, long absorb'd in pleasure's giddy joys,
On cards and dice he every hour employs ;
And rather would he jest with some low page,
Than with a gentle youth discreet and sage,
Who, pleas'd to prove himself a faithful friend,
Might teach him soon his idle ways to mend.

Plague on your idle ways, replied our Host :
Why, how now, Franklein ? Surely, well thou know'st,
That we have each our promise given to tell
Some pleasant tale or two.—I know it well,
The Franklein said : but where's the great delay,
If to this youth a word or two I say ?—
I tell thee, Franklein, without one word more,
Thy tale begin——Sire Host ! I own your power ;
By no means would I wish to give offence ;
And far as my poor wit can recompence
Your time and hearing, I will strive to please,
And, if my tale does that, I am at ease.

Our generous fires, the Britons, lov'd of old
To hear adventures strange in story told ;

Or

108 PROLOGUE TO THE FRANKLEIN'S TALE.

Or feats of arms in pleasing numbers sung,
And, leaning on their spears, in rapture hung
On the sweet accents of the minstrel's tongue. }
One of these tales I still remember well,
Which, if it so you please, I now will tell.
But, firs, ere I begin, I this beseech,
As I'm a man unlearn'd, and rude in speech,
And skill in rhetoric could ne'er obtain,
That you'll excuse my phraze, which must be plain.
I ne'er on fam'd Parnassus' heights have play'd,
Nor Tully's rules divine have ever read ;
And flowers I know of none, except indeed }
Those that so richly deck th' enamell'd mead ;
For of the flowers of speech I ne'er took heed. }

THE

THE FRANKLEIN'S TALE.

BUT to my tale.—There liv'd, for valour fam'd,
 In once Armorica, now Bretagne nam'd,
 A knight, who fear'd no toils nor feats to prove,
 To win the guerdon of his lady's love.
 But ere he could obtain the glorious meed,
 For her he wrought full many a hardy deed;
 Yet light he deem'd the heaviest toils he bore,
 Weigh'd with such charms as ne'er were seen before.
 Of lineage high the beauteous fair was born;
 And long he fear'd, lest haply she might scorn
 His humble suit, and long in vain he strove
 To check the sighs that spoke his hopeless love.
 At length, by pity mov'd, the gentle maid
 With love's soft sweet return his fears repaid;
 Much she his worth, his virtues all approv'd,
 But most his tenderness of soul she lov'd:
 And now she grants, that Hymen's sacred bands
 Shall join in union firm their faithful hands.
 Then, rapture all, the youth did fondly plight
 His honour's gage, that neither day, nor night,

No,

No, not in all his life, would he controul
 Her smallest wish, but ever bend his soul
 Obedient to her will, in guise the same
 As yields the humblest lover to his dame;
 Content, in shame of man's supreme degree,
 To have the name alone of sov'reignty.

With gracious smiles she thank'd her courteous
 swain,

And, "Sir," she said, "since you so large a rein
 "Thus kindly proffer, never cause of strife,
 "From fault of mine, shall vex our blissful life:
 "But me you e'er shall find a duteous wife."

Secure in mutual vows thus both rely,
 That joys unmix'd shall crown the nuptial tie:
 And sure, my friends, to those who hope to prove
 The lasting sweets of undiminish'd love,
 This truth should fully and betimes be known,
 That each to th' other's will must yield his own:
 For free as air, and fleeting as the wind,
 Love ne'er by tyrant force will be confin'd;
 And, when he sees prepar'd the galling ties,
 "Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies:"
 Hateful alike to every generous soul,
 To women as to men, is harsh controul;

And

And he with surest aim his end pursues,
Who rules with mildness, or with patience wooes :
For meek-ey'd Patience, so wise authors write,
Is fraught with virtues rare, and wondrous might ;
And oft her mild and softening arts attain
What churlish rigour ever seeks in vain.
Learn to forgive ; for, whether pleas'd or no,
Learn it ye must, or soon or late, I trow :
For where that man so perfect shall we find,
Who is not sometimes peevish or unkind ?
Anger inflames, and wine's benignant power
Is known the mildest breasts too oft to sour ;
Pain racks the nerves, and, ah ! who doth not know
Th' o'erpow'ring weight of soul-subduing woe ?
Then let not each unaim'd or slight offence
To deep resentment ever give pretence ;
Nor let us e'er retain too strict record
Of each small wrong, or each injurious word.
Impress'd with thoughts like these, our knight so soon
Implor'd forgiveness, ere a fault was done ;
And she as wisely to this law agreed,
That mutual pardon should each wrong succeed.
The knight, when now the nuptial band was tied,
Home in glad triumph led his lovely bride,

To

To where in banner'd state his castle stood,
Frowning defiance on the western flood.
Who, but the happy few, to whom kind Heaven
The richest balm of envied life hath given,
The countless heartfelt pleasures may relate,
'Thrice honour'd Hymen ! which thy favourites wait ?
Such were the joys that bless'd this happy pair,
Whilst through its varied round revolv'd a year ;
'Twas then Arviragus (for such the name
The hero boasted in the lists of fame),
Panting to win bright honour's deathless crown,
To England came, the seat of fair renown.

Who then may tell what direful woes oppress'd,
Oh, hapless Dorigene ! thy labouring breast ?
In vain with anxious care each pitying friend
Strove to her grief the kindliest balms to lend ;
'Rest of her love, her soul resolv'd to know
The pangs alone of unabating woe.
But as full oft the smallest drop is known
T' impress by ceaseless fall th' obdurate stone ;
So, won by frequent calls, at length her ear
Deign'd consolation's soothing voice to hear.
Her much lov'd lord too, mindful to approve
The truth and firmness of his plighted love,

Had

Had tidings sent, and bade her cease to mourn,
And wait with cheerful hope his quick return.

Now from her soften'd brow dispers'd the gloom,
Her native smiles once more her eyes illumine;
And with fond joy, though long in vain implor'd,
Her friends behold her to their arms restor'd.
Oft o'er the rugged cliffs she lov'd to roam,
Whilst wide around the subject billows foam,
Pleas'd to pursue with keen and anxious eye
Each distant sail, that almost touch'd the sky:
Yet, though intent she gaz'd, the flattering view
Did but her grief with livelier sense renew.
Oft would she thus in bitterest anguish cry,
Is there not one among the host I spy,
Not one kind ship, which o'er the raging deep
Will waft my lord, and bid my sorrows sleep?
Then would she round her eyes deep-musing throw,
Or fix them on the gulph that boil'd below.
But when the rocks in dire and drear array
Rais'd their black heads amid the wat'ry way,
Then would again her panting bosom beat,
Then sail with sudden change her tottering feet;
And sitting on the grassy bank again,
Her eyes still fix'd upon the roaring main,
She piteously would sigh, and thus complain.

VOL. III.

I

Father

Father of heaven ! whose wise and potent sway
These well rul'd worlds in order just obey ;
Who mak'ft, we're told, nought ufeless or in vain,
“ Why do in seas these hideous rocks remain ? ”
For nought of fair creation these display,
But tofs'd in fhapeless heaps unfeemly lay ;
No creature they, nor man, nor bird, nor beaft,
No clime, nor north, nor fouth, nor weft, nor eaft,
Do they e'er blefs, no comfort fweet afford,
But with pure evil they alone are ftor'd.

Think of the thoufands, that in evil hour
Hav'n fall'n fad victims to their ruthlefs power ;
Form'd too were thefe in thine own likenefs fair,
Once bleft and deem'd not worthlefs of thy care :
Then on mankind did thy mild radiance fhine,
And on the new-born race beam'd love divine :
Why then are now thefe engines dire employ'd ?
And why thy faireft work fo foon destroy'd ?

Wife clerks will fay, though I no caufe can fee,
That that which is, is beft, whate'er it be.
Be theirs the ftife of words ; yet this I know,
'Tis Heaven that bids the bellowing winds to blow ;
And though no cafuift, hence too clear I prove,
That heaven from thefe fad arms ftill keeps my love.

Save

Save him, ye powers! but oh! down, down, oh!
sweep

These hateful rocks beneath the gulphy deep!—
Thus was she wont along the founding shore
In ceaseless plaints her stubborn woes to pour:
From ocean's view her friends with added grief
Saw that her woes could hope no kind relief;
Still by new scenes and varied sports they strive
Each anxious thought from her rack'd breast to drive.
Now to the airy pipe's enliv'ning sound
They beat with measur'd step the echoing ground;
Now try, if haply aught the mimic fight
Of graver ches may yield of mild delight.

A garden fair there stood, which wanton May
Had taught her earliest blossom to display;
Art's happy toils with self-taught nature vied
To deck the scene in beauty's loveliest pride:
Here on a day the youths and maids resort,
And the gay hours fly swift in rural sport.
With them her friends the beauteous mourner led,
And hop'd the lovely scene soft balm might shed,
To sooth her woes, while every art they use,
O'er her swoln breast sweet comfort to diffuse.

Around profuse the dainty cates are pour'd,
And mirth and pleasure grace the festive board.

Now to their sports refresh'd they quick repair,
With song and dance resounds the gladden'd air;
Joy smiles o'er all, save Dorigene alone;
'Midst the gay scene she pours her ceaseless moan;
For him, the dearest source of all her pain,
She seeks along the dance, but seeks in vain.
Among the rest a youth of aspect rare
And comely mien appear'd; his jetty hair
In wanton ringlets o'er his shoulders flow'd,
And in his blooming cheek young vigour glow'd.
Skill'd too was he in every polish'd art,
That points with added sting love's destin'd dart;
In song, in dance unrivall'd he excell'd,
And every heart in pleasing bondage held.
Yet not alone in outward grace he shone,
Virtue and wisdom were alike his own;
Aurelius he was nam'd, and long his heart
Had own'd the power of love's all conqu'ring dart:
For Dorigene he sigh'd, but sigh'd unknown;
Ne'er had he dar'd his lawless flame to own,
Save what perchance his plaintive songs reveal'd,
For these would speak the grief his lips conceal'd:

Sonnets,

Sonnets, enigmas, roundelays, he'd frame ;
His song was various, but his theme the same.

Thus, and thus only sometimes would he dare
His soul's deep sorrows darkly to declare,
Save that erewhile amid the sprightly dance,
His love-sick eye would steal th' ecstatic glance ;
Or hang delighted on her beauteous face,
Like one who sued for mercy's pitying grace.
It chanc'd meantime, ere yet the festive crew
From the gay garden's mirthful scenes withdrew,
'Neath a green alley's dark and awful shade,
For love or cooler contemplation made,
They met—Aurelius first the dame address'd,
And thus with faltering tongue his pain express'd.

“ O ! if kind fate on that ill omen'd day,
“ Which bore thy lov'd Arviragus away,
“ Me too had banish'd to some distant shore,
“ Where I might ne'er have view'd those beauties
more !

“ For hopeless is my grief, and well I know
“ The life-drops of my heart, how vain they flow !
“ Deign then my woes to view with pitying eye,
“ And one kind word, oh ! grant me, ere I die !”

Quick on Aurelius then her eyes she turn'd,
While with disdain her heaving bosom burn'd;
"And thou so long, base, treacherous man," she cried,
"For this thy vile insidious arts hast tried!
"Know thou, that faith I owe my honour'd lord,
"No time shall weaken, or in deed, or word;
"But long as bounteous heaven shall grant me life,
"I will e'er prove a chaste and duteous wife.
"This I resolve"—but, with compassion feign'd,
She to his prayer at length this answer deign'd.

"Since, poor Aurelius! such I see your pain,
"That you ne'er cease thus sadly to complain,
"Let one bold deed your warm pretensions prove;
"For what's too hard for those who truly love?
"Hear then my sacred promise—on the day,
"When from the British coast you sweep away,
"By force or potent art, yon rocky chain,
"That braves with sullen scorn th' insulting main;
"When this you've done, that o'er the gentle tide,
"From dangers freed, each ship may boldly ride;
"Then your warm wish completed you shall find,
"Then love shall smile, and Dorigene be kind."
"Is there none other grace?" he said and sigh'd:
"None, by that Lord that made me," she replied.

"Then

"Then hopeless is the boon I've dar'd to ask,
"For power of man can ne'er atchieve the task;
"Thus then I bow, condemn'd to death a prey:"
He spoke, and sudden turn'd his steps away.

Meantime the revellers appear'd in view,
And joining Dorigene they all anew
Begin their rural gambols to pursue;
And there they sported, till the full-orb'd sun
Wearied and weak his destin'd course had run;
Then from the garden homeward bent their way,
Pleas'd with the varied pastimes of the day.
Not so Aurelius, sick with heartfelt grief,
Sad he retires, nor dares to hope relief:
A death-like chilness o'er his limbs he feels;
On the bare ground he sad and suppliant kneels;
With ardent hands uplifted to the skies,
Raving he pours his grief with ceaseless cries;
Then 'mong the gods the bright and glorious sun
He first implores—and thus his prayer begun.

Father of light! he cries, whose potent sway
Plants, herbs, and trees, and flowers alike obey;
Who live but as they drink thy quick'ning fire,
Bloom in thy smile, or hid from thee expire:

O mighty Phœbus ! look with pity down
On one who sinks oppress'd by beauty's frown.
Well thou my prayer may'st grant, if so thou wilt;
Of love I'm conscious, but I know not guilt.
Deign then thine ear to lend, whilst I impart
That which alone can heal my bleeding heart.
Thy lovely sister, potent Lord ! presides
O'er the vast ocean's ever-changing tides ;
Neptune's own trident to her empire yields,
And owns her mistress of the briny fields :
And, as thou know'st, her first and great desire
Is to be cheer'd with thy enlivening fire,
For which her constant step thy path pursues ;
So with like constancy old Ocean wooes
Fair Luna's grace, for her and her alone
Rivers and seas their guardian goddess own.
Grant then, O Phœbus ! this my earnest prayer,
And save a hapless wretch from deep despair !
And when you next ascend the burning line,
Where sultry Leo's blazing glories shine,
Pray her to bid the swelling floods arise,
And lift their foamy heads to lash the skies ;
That so each rock, that frowns on Britain's coast,
May sink beneath the whelming torrent lost.

Two years let it remain, I humbly pray ;
Then to my fair one boldly I may say,
Your promise keep, the rocks are sunk away. }

Grant me, O Phoebus ! this my fond desire,
And with thee pray thy sister to conspire !
Pray her, attentive keep thy steps in view,
And with like pace her steady course pursue !
Then, full for two whole years, both night and day,
A constant spring-flood shall her power obey.
But, oh ! forget not, that these rocks be hurl'd
To Pluto's dark domain, the nether world ;
Else, sad presage ! all bootless is my pain,
And my fond hopes to win my fair are vain.

Then with bare foot to Delphos I'll repair,
And joyful pay my grateful homage there.
See down my cheek what copious sorrows flow,
And mark with ceaseless streams my constant woe !
He spoke, and instant sunk each sense away,
And lifeless on the earth entranc'd he lay.

Now had the flower of chivalry once more
Return'd to much-lov'd Bretagne's long-lost shore :
Enraptur'd Dorigene beholds again
The dear and honour'd cause of all her pain ;

And

And now, secure from battle's dire alarms,
Clasps her lov'd hero in her faithful arms.
Full little did he ween, what lawless fires
Had rous'd a stranger's breast to wild desires;
Faithful himself, his great and generous mind
Ne'er to suspicion's whispers dark inclin'd:
Light was his heart, nor cares nor doubts it knew;
Blest in the love of her, he thought so true.

Aurelius now, with hopeless grief oppress'd,
Had two long years the bed of sorrow press'd,
The while, nor joy nor comfort might he prove,
Save the sweet solace of a brother's love.
He knew the fatal cause, and he alone,
That bade his heaving breast ne'er cease to moan;
Yet was it whole without, no wound was seen,
Deep in his heart was fix'd the arrow keen;
And well ye know, how perilous the cure,
That heals the skin, ere yet the wound's secure.

Long had with tender sympathetic pain
His sorrowing brother heard him thus complain,
When it bethought him that a book erewhile,
With which he us'd at Orleans to beguile
(As busy minds are wont) his vacant hours,
He once had seen, of strange and secret powers;

Propitious

Propitious fortune to his wond'ring eyes
Had thrown, unask'd, the rare and envied prize :
Full on the desk to view expos'd it lay,
Left by a youth, who oft had turn'd away
From graver law's decrees, and maxims sage,
To feast on magic's fascinating page.

This book spoke much of operations
Touching the eight and twenty mansions
Belonging to the moon, and tales like these,
Which now no credence gain, no longer please :
For pure religion now her light unfolds,
And the free mind no more in bondage holds.

Struck with this thought, his conscious joy appears,
No longer now he doubts, no more he fears :
My brother's woes, he cries, now soon shall cease,
And his rack'd heart again shall taste of peace :
For potent art, I ween, ofttimes may cause
E'en nature to o'erstep her steadiest laws.
Full oft in trophied hall, or festive bower,
Have quaint magicians prov'd their wondrous power ;
While through the arch the new-born river flow'd,
And gilded barges on the stream were row'd ;
Now the grim lion o'er the forest scours,
Now the rich meadow blooms with mimic flowers,

Or

Or blushing vines their cluster'd stores display;
Then banner'd towers uprise in fair array,
And instant vanish, at command, away.

Thus then I trust, that haply might I find
At Orleans now some clerk, whose subtle mind
With magic's wondrous lore was rightly stor'd,
He to our woes might quick relief afford.

Charm'd by his spells then soon might disappear
Those rocks, that chill the stoutest hearts with fear;
And ships might seem in tranquil state to ride
On the safe bosom of the level tide.

Let but this semblance three short days remain,
Then shall my brother's heart forget its pain.

Quick to his brother's mournful bed he flies,
And fills his gladden'd heart with sweet surprise.
Up starts the youth, his limbs no languor knew,
Resolv'd hope's first dawn instant to pursue;
And Orleans' gates already seem in view.

Thither he eager hastes, nor doubts to find
The certain balm to heal his tortur'd mind.

As near they came, they chanc'd a youth to meet,
Who seem'd with joy their wish'd approach to greet,
And to their wond'ring ears relates the cause,
Which their fond hopes to learned Orleans draws.

Now

Now many an eager question they propose,
And beg the cunning wizard to disclose
The various fates of those they once had lov'd:
But the sad tale their tenderest sorrows mov'd.
Homeward at length his way the forcerer bends,
And glad Aurelius on his steps attends;
There he beholds the high and sumptuous board,
With laughing plenty's choicest viands stor'd:
Ne'er had he seen before such pomp display'd,
Nor mansion gay so gorgeously array'd.

Ere their repast they took, the wizard wight
Call'd forth strange scenes to feast th' astonish'd sight;
Forests he saw, and deer of monstrous size,
Whose towering frontlets seem'd to touch the skies.
To the fleet hounds some fell a helpless prey,
Wounded with arrows keen some gasping lay;
Then falconers (these retir'd) succeed in view,
And the lank heron o'er the lake pursue.
There on a plain he saw bold knights advance,
And brave the combat with the quivering lance;
And, stranger still, himself in proper mien
Leading his favourite fair at length was seen,
In the light dance upon the festal green.

} But

But when the wondrous man his hand uprear'd,
 Then the bright visions instant disappear'd ;
 Yet while the gay successive scenes he view'd,
 In the same chamber still unmov'd he stood ;
 Which with strange instruments, and books profound,
 Array'd in order quaint, was deck'd around.

His lacquey then the master call'd in haste,
 And bade him bring the long-delay'd repast.

"Sir," he replied, with lowly bending head,

"Your orders are obey'd, the table's spread,"

"Then we'll retire," he said, "without delay ;

" 'Tis time refreshment sweet should now repay

"The cares and labours of the lengthen'd day."

Supper remov'd, the treaty next began ;

What great reward shall tempt thee, mighty man !

The rocks of France to move, that none remain

From Loire's deep banks to those of gentle Seine ?

"A thousand pounds is the rich boon I ask,"

He then replied, "ere I perform the task."

"A thousand pounds !" rejoic'd Aurelius cries :

"Were the whole world mine own," he quick re-

plies,

"Grant but my wish, I'd give with joy the prize :

"Agreed—

"Agreed—and faithfully the price I'll pay,
"If my warm wishes meet no dull delay :
"But then first promise, ere to-morrow's sun
"His course hath finish'd, that the deed be done."

Aurelius then content retir'd to rest,
And long-lost sleep again his eyelids press'd ;
For labour past, and hope of joys in store,
Had spread oblivion sweet his sorrows o'er.

Meantime Aurelius and his wizard friend
Their footsteps back to Bretagne's confines bend.
And now December's frosts, if right I ween,
Had from fair Nature torn her robe of green ;
Now oft obscur'd the pale and languid sun
Mourn'd with shorn beams the course he late had run ;
He whose bright locks, like streams of burning gold,
No mortal eye unhurt might erst behold,
Now, as the moon, all wan and weak appear,
And scarce the mid-day gloom can faintly cheer.
Now in due honour to the festal days
Aloft the cheerful hearth began to blaze ;
O'er the rich board extends the smoaking chine,
And the full bugle foams with generous wine.

Obsequious first Aurelius tries to move
The wizard's mind, his potent art to prove ;

"Nay,

"Nay, if thou heal not soon my sorrow's smart,
"This sword," he cries, "shall pierce thy faithless
heart."

The cunning seer with pity view'd his grief,
And anxious strove to bring him kind relief;
He watch'd with faithful zeal the lucky hour,
Which surest bids to speed his magic power;
Each eye with strange illusions to deceive,
And make e'en Dorigene herself believe,
That the huge rocks, that once deform'd the shore,
Now in th' abyss engulph'd, shall rise no more.

At length, propitious to the wizard's prayer,
The hour is come, and bids him quick prepare
His books, and tables fraught with magic lore,
That teach the heaven's kind aspects to explore:
In them strange charms and potent spells he finds,
And human eyes with vain illusions blinds;
By these dark arts each rock's terrific head
Seems whelm'd and sunk 'neath ocean's gulphy bed.

Aurelius now, long toss'd betwixt th' extremes
Of dark despair and hope's enlivening gleams,
Had watch'd by day, by night, with anxious heart,
Th' expected proof of blest enchantment's art;

Now

Now, when he saw his eager wish complete,
O'erjoy'd falls instant at his master's feet ;
To him and love's all-powerful queen he pays
The warmest tribute of his grateful praise.

Next, to the high-arch'd temple he repairs,
For there he knew her pure and constant prayers
The lovely Dorigene each morning pour'd,
And thank'd kind Heaven for her lov'd lord restor'd.
Her there he met ; new fears his soul oppress'd,
And in low tone he thus the dame address'd.

" Thou ! who dost rule with sole supreme controul

" The hopes and fears of this devoted soul !

" Whom more than life I love, than death I fear,

" Lend to this last address a patient ear !

" And though thou'rt dead to pity's tender pain,

" Thou wilt not, canst not thy pure honour stain.

" Canst thou forget, that 'neath yon garden's shade

" The sacred vow with free accord was made ?

" And though unworthy this poor heart may prove

" To win the matchless guerdon of thy love ;

" Yet 'tis thine honour now, lov'd fair, I seek,

" 'Tis that alone, which gives me power to speak.

" My part is done, thyself the truth behold,

" And oh ! thy plighted faith for ever hold.

VOL. III.

K

" Yet

" Yet thine alone it is, or now to save
" A hapless wretch, or doom him to the grave:
" Thine own command obsequious I obey,
" And tell thee, each huge rock is sunk away."

This said, Aurelius left th' astonish'd dame,
And instant horror shook her tender frame;
From her pale cheek recoil'd the crimson flood,
And, lost in wild distraction, fix'd she stood.
Ah! guileless wretch! too pure for cautious care,
How could I 'scape, she cried, so blind a snare?
How could I dream, that nature would combine,
Again t' o'erwhelm a heart so worn as mine?

Homeward at length, with sorrowing steps, she goes,
But buries in her breast her weight of woes:
Far from his home Arviragus is gone;
And, but to him, she told her griefs to none.
Yet would she oft alone in tears complain,
And thus she pour'd her solitary strain.

Ah! hapless wretch! she cried, whom un-
ware

Stern fate hath captur'd in her cruel snare!
From which no hopes of sweet release remain,
Save or from death, or foul dishonour's stain.

Yet

Yet witness, righteous Heaven ! that here I choose
Far readier life than innocence to lose.

Death is the wretch's surest, steadiest friend,
And will in peace his keenest tortures end.

Full many a wife and many a hapless maid
Of old have call'd him dauntless to their aid ;
And from deep woes their souls have quickly freed
(So story tells) by one heroic deed.

When of old time, in Athens' fam'd domain,
The thirty tyrants held their bloody reign,
Too-wealthy Phido at a sumptuous feast
They basely slew, their unsuspecting guest ;
Then bade the minions of their curs'd commands
On his fair daughters lay their ruthless hands,
And bring them forth, sad victims, to fulfil
The lawless craving of their brutal will.

The maids they merciless to dance constrain'd
On the wet floor their father's blood had stain'd.

Indignant they their savage foes defied,
And free from base dishonour nobly died ;
Down a deep well's dark cavern, undismay'd,
Leapt, prodigal of life, each glorious maid.

Thus, when, by conquest's savage joys elate,
Messene's sons, t' insult fall'n Sparta's fate,

Bade her fair daughters yield their blooming charms
To their stern conquerors' lascivious arms,
Not one was found among the virgin train,
Whom her own poniard had not nobly slain.

Brave too like them, of honour'd memory, prov'd
The maid by Aristoclides belov'd :

On the same night the hated tyrant flew
Her aged fire, to Dian's fane she flew ;
And, where the goddess' statue high was plac'd,
Clung to the sacred form, and close embrac'd,
And, firm of purpose, the lov'd image held
Till her stern fate at length to yield compell'd.
If untroth'd virgins thus could boldly dare
The keenest pangs of torturing death to bear,
Much more ought I, a lov'd and honour'd wife,
To guard the faith I pledg'd, and yield my life.

'Twas thus that Asdrubal's all-glorious dame
Still lives immortal in the rolls of fame;
When the sack'd gates, so oft in vain assail'd,
Open'd at length, and Rome's proud arms prevail'd,

She saw around her spread the hostile fires,
But more she fear'd the conqueror's warm desires ;
Rous'd

Rous'd to quick transport at the maddening
 thought,
 Her lovely babes (a mournful group) she fought,
 And to a favouring height the victims brought;
 Then push'd them off, and, with new fury fir'd,
 Rush'd on the flames herself, and there expir'd.
 The Roman dame by Tarquin's force compress'd,
 Plung'd the keen sword in her dishonour'd breast.
 Thus did the fair Milesian virgins fall,
 Safe from the outrage of the conquering Gaul:
 And tales a thousand more could I relate,
 Of those, who, true to honour, smil'd at fate.

When Abradates' sorrowing wife beheld
 Her murder'd husband stretch'd upon the field,
 Resolv'd to follow still her much-lov'd lord,
 In her soft breast she sheath'd her shining sword,
 And her warm life-blood in his wounds she pour'd.

Since, then, so many thus have life disdain'd,
 Rather than live by base dishonour stain'd,
 Resolv'd I'll die, nor ever false will prove
 To a much-honour'd husband's tender love.

Did not, Demotion! each griev'd heart bewail
 Thy self-slain daughter's sad disastrous tale?

And who, O Sedasus ! could e'er relate
With tearless eye thy children's mournful fate?
Shall not the Theban maids soft pity claim,
Who call'd stern death to hide their guiltless shame?
Why need I speak of Nicerates' wife,
Who, for like cause, bereav'd herself of life?
Or, Alcibiades ! the mortal pain
That she, who lov'd thee, felt, when thou wert
 slain,
Lest uninterr'd thy body might remain ?
Who hath not heard Alcestes' honour'd name ?
Or, chaste Penelope ! thy wider fame ?
Laodamia next in memory lives,
But not her lost Protefilaus survives ;
And she, whose fame each tongue delights to tell,
Who life disdain'd, when godlike Brutus fell ;
And Artemisia, Caria's well-known pride,
Who rais'd th' immortal pile, when her Mausolus
 died.

Twice sunk the sun beneath the western main,
Yet did the dame with ceaseless sighs complain.
On the third night Arviragus return'd,
And ask'd with tender care why thus she mourn'd.

His

His tender care did but her griefs renew,
And from her eyes increasing torrents drew.

"Would," she exclaim'd, "that I had ne'er been born!

"Oh! that I ne'er had fondly, madly sworn!"

Then truly to him she the tale declar'd,

As ye've already in due order heard.

"Is there none other cause, my life!" he cries,

"That bids incessant torrents swell thine eyes?"

"None," she replied. "Then comfort take," he said,

"Nor let sad sorrow longer bow thine head.

"Heaven oft to misery guides a pitying friend,

"And may to thee unhop'd assistance lend.

"Yet this remember, spite of bitterest pain,

"Thy sacred promise unimpair'd maintain.

"Truth is the highest prize we e'er can keep,"

He nobly said, then sadly 'gan to weep;

And thus went on—"On pain of instant death,

"I charge thee, ne'er convey the slightest breath

"To soul that lives, but in your bosom hide

"The fatal sorrows that our fears betide:

"See too, thy looks do not thy griefs betray,

"And mine I'll strive t' endure, as best I may."

Then quick he call'd a squire and gentle maid;

"Follow my much-lov'd Dorigene," he said,

“ And to such place your mistress’ steps attend.”
They bow submits, and forth their way they bend:
Yet why she thither went, was still conceal’d,
For to no ear had she the cause reveal’d.

Scarce had they pass’d along the nearest street,
Ere that Aurelius on their way they meet;
For well was wont his keen and amorous eye
Her every action, every step to spy:
And whether met by chance, or fix’d intent,
He ask’d with joy, which way her footsteps bent.

She, as one mad with grief, or wild despair,
“ To yon vile garden,” answer’d, “ I repair,
“ True to the vow I made so rashly there:
“ Such are, alas! my husband’s fix’d commands.”

Aurelius dumb with deep amazement stands,
And, as her words he weighs, his kindling soul,
Awaken’d now to virtue’s sweet controul,
The generous husband’s noble worth admires,
And loaths with cordial hate his own impure de-
sires.

And thus he spoke, “ Belov’d and honour’d fair!
“ Believe me, much thy virtuous griefs I share;
“ And so sincerely my full soul reveres
“ Thy husband’s noble conflict, that with tears,
“ With

“ With heartfelt tears I feel his generous strife,
“ Who yields in honour’s cause so lov’d a wife.
“ Tell him I freely all your vows resign,
“ And to his juster claims surrender mine.
“ Now then farewell ! blest mirror of thy sex !
“ And may no future fears thy soul perplex !”

Thus by the squire, as by the knight, appear’d
Nice honour’s laws to be alike rever’d :
Pierc’d with his goodness, prostrate on her knees,
Her grateful hands her kind deliverer seize ;
Tears spoke alone, for words refus’d to tell
The new-born joys, that now her bosom swell.

Long liv’d in union sweet this happy pair,
Nor dark distrust they knew, nor carking care ;
Blest in each other, thus their days they pass’d,
And love’s pure torch burn’d cloudless to the last.

Now big with ruin to Aurelius’ fears
Th’ expecting wizard’s costly claim appears :
“ Ah ! curs’d,” he said, “ be that unhappy hour,
“ When base I yielded to love’s treach’rous power !
“ My goodly heritage I now must sell,
“ And far from friends in lonely exile dwell ;
“ Unless (what least I hope) distress like mine
“ May to sweet sympathy his breast incline.

“ This

" This boon assur'd, I may at least essay
" Each year fix'd portions of the debt to pay ;
" For though my heart sinks deep with heaviest care,
" Yet shall base falsehood ne'er find entrance there."

His coffer then with trembling hands he drains,
And takes his lessen'd treasures' sad remains.
Five times an hundred pounds is all his store,
Nor can repeated reckonings make it more.
This to the cunning feer he faithful bears,
And time the rest to pay implores with tears.
" Since, sir," he said, " nought yet could e'er pre-
vail

" On my firm mind in honour'd faith to fail,
" And rather now in tatter'd weeds, I swear,
" I'd beg from door to door my scanty fare,
" Than not to thee repay with thankful hand
" The full requital of thy just demand ;
" Yet ere the rest I pay, I ask this grace,
" Safe sureties take, but grant me longer space.
" Ruin attends, if thou my prayer refuse,
" And I my substance must for ever lose."

" Have not," the man replied, " my faithful
hands

" Perform'd to full extent thy hard commands ?

" And

"And do not now thy lady's blooming charms

"Bless with unfated joys thy happy arms?"

"Well thou the work hast done, I free confess;

"Yet do not I the lovely fair possess."

Then he in order just the tale began,

Each fact relating to th' astonish'd man.

"Arviragus," he says, "did nobly choose

"Rather his love, than dearer faith to lose.

"Who, lovely Dorigene! may count thy tears,

"Thy heart-felt sorrows, and thy tender fears,

"And, 'mid them all, thy fix'd contempt of life,

"Rather than prove a base and faithless wife?

"Guiltless the vow she made, nor could believe

"Such strange illusions might her eyes deceive.

"This such soft pity in my bosom wrought,

"That purg'd each sensual wish, each baser thought.

"Pure as she came, I bade her home return,

"And made her faithful heart no longer mourn."

"Well have both knight and squire," the wizard
said,

"The sacred laws of courtesy obey'd.

"But bounteous Heaven hath not to you confin'd

"The blest exertions of a generous mind:

"Here

"Here then I freely all your debt release,
"And may your soul henceforth be sooth'd in peace."
Here ends my tale, and now 'tis yours to say,
Which did the noblest proof of worth display.

PROLOGUE

TO THE

DOCTOR'S TALE.

A Future day, our jolly Host replied,
May well suffice that question to decide.
Of thee, good Doctor, the next tale I ask;
And well, I know, thou wilt perform the task.—
If worth your hearing I can aught supply,
Freely, fir Host, he answer'd, I'll comply.

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"And with observance just my ready hand
"Obeys th' Almighty Master's dread command."

Thus spake the potent Queen with conscious pride,
And to the trial Earth and Heaven defied ;
For as her varied skill the artist shews,
When with appropriate blush she decks the rose,
Or bids the lily charm th' admiring sight,
Clad in her robes of chaste unfullied white ;
So the same tints in the lov'd maid combine,
And in just shade and due proportion shine.

Now since her birth had fourteen summers flown,
And Love's fair Goddess hail'd her as her own ;
The God of Day her flowing locks had dyed
Like the bright streamlets of the solar tide :
Yet not to person were her charms confin'd,
Hers was each beauty of the cultur'd mind.
In the mild graces of her modest mien
The flower of virgin gentleness was seen ;
Meek was her soul, and thankful to receive
Each soft correction Friendship's voice could give ;
And when requir'd, as in an evening sky
Is Zephyr's scarce-heard sound, was her reply.
Though on her mind had wisdom's precious lore
Pour'd the rich treasures of her copious store,

Still

Still was her speech in modest plainness drest,
And well her soul's simplicity confess'd.
Not in hard words, like theirs who wish to shew
The very little that by chance they know;
But pure and proper as her rank became,
Clear as her thoughts, and mark'd with maiden shame,
From Sloth's insidious bands her powers to save,
To varied Industry her time she gave;
And with like dread away in haste she flew,
Whene'er the fiend Excess appear'd in view:
Oft she for this some sudden ill would feign,
Beg to retire, and undisturb'd complain,
Whene'er she revel gay or feast foresaw,
Where ill-taught Mirth might break Discretion's law.
And sure the passions of a blooming maid
Will duly ripen in their destin'd shade,
Nor need exposure to the sun for aid:
Yet this we do, when Pleasure's gay repast
Before the eyes of youth too soon we cast.
Well then, ye elder dames, who guard the fair,
Watch your great charge with due and constant care;
Far from the haunts of Vice their footsteps lead,
And teach them early Virtue's paths to tread.

Hence

Hence were ye chosen, or that chaste and pure
Pleasure's gay baits could ne'er your eyes allure,
Or that, by sad experience wiser grown,
Ye well can watch the frailties, once your own:
Thus him the surest park-keeper we find,
Who once to deer-stealing was most inclin'd.
Then of the false betrayer well beware,
Nor let base gold e'er slack your watchful care:
But chief Heav'n shield ye from the base intent,
Yourselfes to foul seduction to consent;
For of the vile, the vilest sure are they,
Who can entrusted innocence betray.

Ye parents too! by nature's laws assign'd
The faithful guardians of the tender mind!
Watch well your sacred trust; and oh! beware
That yourselves spread not the destructive snare!
For this ye do, when, by weak fondness sway'd,
Ye shrink to use correction's wholesome aid;
Or when, more foul! yourselves your sons betray,
And by example vile to vice direct the way.
But to my tale—This bright and peerless maid
Liv'd unrestrain'd, nor needed guidance' aid;
For in her perfect pattern all might see
The very image they themselves should be.

For all her virtues prais'd, except alone
The green-ey'd monster, to detraction prone,
Who envious hates all merit but her own.

One day this maiden to the church repairs,
To pour to Heaven her pure and humble prayers;
And thus it chanc'd, that, as along she pass'd,
On her his lawless eyes a judge had cast.
Struck with her charms, his wily mind revolves
How best to win her, and at length resolves
By subtle craft the lovely prize to gain,
Since every hope besides he sees is vain.
Guarded by numerous friends his fears descry,
That her lov'd virtues open force defy;
And well he augurs that a soul so pure
No base temptation could from virtue lure.
Fix'd in his foul intent, of kindred kind
A wretch he seeks, of base and fardid mind,
Prone to vile deeds, and but in mischief bold,
To him his secret, shameless wish he told.
Instant the pander to his will assents,
And his quick wit as soon a plot invents :
Amplly the judge his docile minion paid,
And smil'd secure in his expected aid.

But

But say, O Muse ! ere further you proceed,
Who were the plotters of so dire a deed !
Let them to infamy be both proclaim'd,
The one was Appius, t'other Claudius nam'd.

Now had again the court in order met,
And on his chair aloft the judge was set :
Forth Claudius comes, and, earnest to be heard,
Against Virginius his complaint preferr'd :
With seeming equity the judge replied,
Ne'er on an absent culprit I decide ;
First let Virginius in the court appear,
And then with justice strict the case I'll hear.

Virginius straight obey'd the judge's will,
When in the court aloud was read the bill—
I much-wrong'd Claudius humbly here complain,
That this Virginius will per force detain
My rightful slave, and, justice to evade,
For his own daughter owns the menial maid.
Her from my house decoy'd at dead of night,
Home to his own convey'd this graceless wight :
Sponsors before you I will instant call,
Who, that I speak the truth, will witness all :
Then, judge most upright ! to my suit attend,
Nor let the poor, when injur'd, want a friend !

L 2

Palsied

But

Palsied with wild surprise the father stood,
And with stern eye th' audacious villain view'd,
But to his falsehoods ere he might reply,
Or witness bring, the charges to deny,
The judge with studied haste this judgment gave,
"Back to her master be return'd the slave!
"Here bring her forth, of this high court the ward,
"Who of th' oppress'd the sacred right shall guard."

Now the true cause th' afflicted father saw,
That warp'd the justice of impartial law:
Home he repairs with sad and stern intent,
And instant for his lovely daughter sent.
Soon as she came, with looks of fix'd despair
Her face he view'd, now first esteem'd too fair;
And on her fatal charms in anguish hung,
Whilst with a parent's pangs his heart was wrung.

"Daughter," he said, "sweet cause of bitterest
woe!

"How may I teach thee thy sad doom to know!
"Weigh well the choice! Here foul dishonour waits
"There death 'gainst every ill bars fast the gates.
"Yet bleeds my soul to think a heart so pure
"Must thus untimely death's dire stroke endure.

"O!

"O! dearest child! whom, since thy mother bore
"Thy lovely form, I ne'er was wont before,
"But with remembrance sweet, and joy supreme,
"By day to doat on, and by night to dream!
"With patience, child most lov'd! thy fate endure,
"For death, and only death, our woes may cure.
"Curst be the day when Appius' lustful eyes
"First view'd thy charms, and mark'd them for his
prize."

Then to her wond'ring ears did he unfold
The vile atrocious tale, I just have told."

"Father," she cried, with faint and falt'ring tongue,
While on his neck in fond embrace she hung,
"Is it beyond all hope by fate decreed,
"That this poor heart, though innocent, must bleed?
"Is there no grace?" she said, o'erpow'r'd with grief,
"Can heav'n-born pity send no kind relief?"

"None," said the wretched sire, "no hope remains,
"If thou would'st fly dishonour's hateful stains."

"Then this," she said, "ere to the darksome grave

"I drop for ever, this one boon I crave:

"Grant me a little space to weep and pray,

"And I will patient then your will obey!

"Jephthah refus'd not this small boon to give
"To the lov'd child his oath forbade to live.
"This was her crime, fond maid! she flew to meet
"Her much-lov'd fire, and kiss his honour'd feet:
"For which"—this said, her senses 'gan decay,
And in her father's arms she swoon'd away,
Wak'd from her trance, she spake with firmer tone,
"Much honour'd fire! thy dread commands be done!
"Content my life I yield my shame to save,
"And sink a spotless virgin to the grave."

Then she his promise begg'd, and pray'd full oft
That when he struck, his sword would smite her soft;
And with that word o'erpow'r'd, she swoon'd again,
And ended then her sorrows and her pain:
For her firm fire the favouring moment took,
And, though with agony his frame was shook,
Yet right he aim'd, though pierc'd with tend'rest woe,
And her head instant sever'd at a blow.

Then to the court a trusty page he sent,
And bade him to the judge the head present.
This when he sees, his blood with vengeance boils,
And on Virginus all his rage recoils.
Him he condemns to death; but righteous Heaven
To suffering worth hath ever shelter given.

Thus

Thus did it now ; for ere his curs'd commands
Obey'd might be, out of his murderous hands,
The people, madly rous'd with fierce uproar,
The hapless victim of his vengeance tore,
And with just rage himself to prison bore.

}

There his dire crimes rose to his frightened view,
And self-condemn'd at length himself he slew.
His base-born minion on the fatal tree,
His life to forfeit, the just laws decree.
Him with soft pity kind Virginus view'd,
And, 'stead of death, for milder exile sued.

Who knows how long Heav'n's patience may endure ?

Late though its vengeance, yet its stroke is sure.
Conscience besides with scourge of steel will smite,
And bring the deeds of darkness all to light.
Hence then beware ! your sins in time forsake,
For judgment, late or soon, each sinner will o'ertake.

PROLOGUE

TO

THE PARDONER'S TALE.

THEN said our Host enrag'd (and roundly swore)
 Both judge and witness I alike abhor.
 What death so painful do not those deserve,
 Who thus from sacred right so vilely swerve?
 Dearly, alas! has this poor suffering maid
 For the vain charms of envied beauty paid;
 And oft indeed with sad surprise we find
 Fortune most fatal when she most is kind;
 Nor rarer our destruction do we owe
 To the best gifts kind Nature can bestow.

Master of mine, and learned Doctor dear,
 This was, alas! a piteous tale to hear.
 May Heaven preserve thee safe from all attacks,
 And may thy pots and jordans know no cracks.
 Thy sovereign conserves may no ills befall,
 But may they, sure of conquest, prosper all!
 In troth, good Doctor, thou'rt a proper man,
 And like a prelate, by St. Ronian:

But

But thy sad story's soft pathetic strain
Has caus'd about my heart a fearful pain.
Some sovereign balsam, quick, oh ! quick apply,
At least some nappy ale, or else I die.
And if I hear not soon some livelier tale,
I fear your choicest drugs will nought avail.
But let's no longer on such sorrows dwell ;
Pard'ner, begin some merry jest to tell.

Ay, by St. Ronian, will I, if I can ;
But I must here embrace the flowing can :
Nor will you get from me or jest or gibe,
Till inspiration deep I first imbibe.

Then said they all, Beware, our reverend friend,
That no loose ribaldry our ears offend ;
But let some moral grave thy words commend. }

I grant, he said, your wish ; and while I drink,
Upon some decent tale I'll strive to think.

THE PARDONER'S TALE.

LORDLINGS, he saith, whene'er in church I
preach,

To the top note I raise my sounding speech,
And like a bell ring out a swinging peal,
And forth by rote the ready texts I deal.

My theme is always one, and ever was,

* *Radix malorum est cupiditas.*

The place from whence I came I first declare ;

Next I produce to view my bulls so fair,

To which our holy Father's seal appends,

(Protection sure to all his favour'd friends.)

Thus me nor priests nor lay may dare embroil,

But aid the progress of my holy toil.

Then I amuse their ears with idle tales,

Decrees of popes and learned cardinals,

Of holy patriarchs and of bishops shew,

And sentences of Latin spout a few.

This o'er my words spreads an imposing glare,

And at my depth of learning makes them stare :

* Covetousness is the root of evil.

By

By arts like these their willing eyes I blind,
And in deep reverence hold the passive mind.
Then I display to them long crystal stones,
Cramm'd full of colour'd shreds, and bits of bones;
And these they all, and many a bauble more,
For sacred relics of the saints adore.

A bone besides of wondrous pow'r I keep,
Cut from the shoulder of a Jewish sheep. }
Then to them thus I say—If you but steep,
My worthy friends, this bone in pond or well,
And if or cow, or calf, or ox should swell,
By poison swallow'd, or by reptile stung,
Take water of that well and wash his tongue :
Or if your sheep should pine with scabby sore,
Take but a single draught, they'll pine no more.
And if the man that owns th' infected beast
Will, ere the morning glads the blushing east,
Fasting each week drink of that well a draught,
As that same holy Jew our elders taught,
His fruitful cattle and his gather'd store
Shall, as he views them, still increase the more :
And if with jealous rage his bosom swell,
Let him but make his pottage from that well,

Then

Then shall he ne'er again his wife suspect,
E'en though himself did erst her crime detect;
And though, o'ercome by sacerdotal charms,
Priests more than two had press'd her in their arms.

Here's too a mitten! once put in your hand,
And plenty soon shall bless your fruitful land,
And whatsoe'er or wheat or oats you sow,
Unusual harvests shall your barns o'erflow;
With this proviso, that you ne'er omit
To bring the offering which you know is fit.
But I must this, my friends, to all premise,
None view my relics with unhallow'd eyes. " "
If in this church then hapless wight should be,
Whose soul's deep stain'd with foul impiety,
And if so dire his sins appear'd to view,
That he for pardon ne'er has dar'd to sue;
If wife there be, who, faithless to her vows,
Hath planted antlers on her husband's brows;
Let not such miscreants vile presume t' approach,
Nor hope these holy relics e'er to touch:
But those whose conscious souls such sins oppress,
Let them to me their heinous guilt confess;
And by the power this sacred bull concedes,
I'll straight absolve them from their foulest deeds.

Thus

Thus since I first began the pardoning trade,
Yearly an hundred goodly marks I've made.
When in my pulpit rais'd, with look profound,
I view the gaping crowd collected round,
Aloud I rant, as ye have heard before,
And tell a thousand idle stories more ;
Then forth with painful toil my neck I stretch,
And east and west my arms extended reach.
So on a barn's long roof you might have seen
A pouting pigeon woo his feather'd queen.

How curs'd a sin is avarice I teach ;
This is the constant theme on which I preach :
For all my aim is this, to make men free
To give their pence, and only unto me.
'Tis not to check foul vice my words are meant,
But gain, ungodly gain 's my sole intent.
And when I once have earth'd them in the grave,
Little I care whether their souls they save.

Some please the ear with flattery's soothing oil,
And hope advancement from so mean a toil ;
Some aim at fame, though plac'd beyond their reach ;
And some from pure ill-nature love to preach.
Lives there a man so daring to offend,
Whether or me, or any reverend friend ?

At

At him I instant aim a covert blow,
And in my sermon gall the rebel foe ;
Cautious his name exprefs I speak not out,
Yet none the ftrong refemblance e'er can doubt :
Beneath this cloak my vengeful ftrokes I deal,
Which thofe, who once offend, are fure to feel.
But you have heard me this before explain,
Preach as I will, I only preach for gain ;
Therefore my theme is yet, and ever was,
Radix malorum eft cupiditas.

Oft may you hear me 'gainft fome vice declaim,
Though I myfelf the while purfue the fame :
Many from avarice thus my preaching turns,
Though with its baleft fires my bofom burns.

Then I enfamples bring them, goodly ftore,
Of thofe who liv'd renown'd in days of yore ;
For fimple folk delight in ftories old,
Which once impreff'd, their minds for ever hold.
Think ye, my friends, I'm fo bereft of fenfe,
That if by preaching I can gain the pence,
So good a calling I will e'er refufe,
And meagre want will rather wilful choofe ?
Think ye for baskets I will ofiers twine,
While others drain their chefts to heap up mine ?

Th'

Th' apostles ne'er I'll strive to counterfeit;
Money I'll have, and wool, and cheese, and wheat:
Nor whether got from rich or poor I heed;
Widows and orphans all supply my need.

Nor these alone, each luxury be mine,
Girls that are kind, and bowls of sparkling wine.

But list, good firs! you ask of me a tale;
And now I've drank a draught of nappy ale,
Though I'm no faint, ne'er doubt but you shall hear
A tale that won't offend the chastest ear:
For grave discourses oft I'm wont to hold;
Then keep your peace, and I'll my tale unfold.

In Flanders once there liv'd a jolly crew,
Whom youth and kindred sports together drew;
Taverns they haunted, riot was their joy,
And cards, and dice, and drink their sole employ;
Each night to Belial did they homage pay,
Nor ceas'd the banquet with the rising day.
Their impious oaths would shock the coarsest ear;
Their Saviour's name impress'd nor awe nor fear:
Wicked and wanton as the Jews of yore,
Again his side they pierc'd, again his limbs they tore.
A train of tumblers, skill'd in wanton feats,
And female all, the festive sport completes;

Singers

Singers with harps, and bawds, and waferers,
Which are the very Devil's officers ;
Form'd are they all to fan unholy fires,
And rouse the passions to impure desires :
For well admonisheth the text divine,
The surest path to sin 's excess in wine :
Drunken with wine incestuous Lot was led
(Dreadful to name) to stain his daughter's bed.
'Twas not, till heated with the maddening bowl,
That the fair dancer won on Herod's soul,
Her wish to grant; and then with shame he bade
His slaves to bring the Baptist's guileless head.
Madness and drunkenness are near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide ;
So saith the noble Roman's moral page,
For both alike display phrenetic rage :
This has its bounds, the raving of an hour ;
That the same phrensy's more continued power.
O cursed Gluttony ! man's direst foe !
Source thou of all the ills we feel below !
By thee to death eternal man were driven,
Had Christ not bled, and op'd the gates of Heaven.
See, then, the foulness of this hateful vice,
Which to atone, requir'd so vast a price.

This

This was the sin that our first parents drove
From blissful Eden's ever-smiling grove.

Long as they liv'd by gluttonous joys unstain'd,
The happy pair in Paradise remain'd :

But instant as they broke the dread command,
The sword wide-flaming arm'd the angel's hand,
And drove the guilty exiles from the land. }

Behold the demons ! dire Disease and Pain !
These form unsated Gluttony's mournful train ;
These on the table's lengthen'd joys attend,
Joys that in long regret are sure to end.

Does not nice fancy with fastidious taste
Send forth o'er south and north, and west and east,
To cull new dainties for the labour'd feast ? }

Fire, earth, and air, and water must combine,
Before the pamper'd glutton deigns to dine.

Well, so saith Paul, hath Heaven's high will ordain'd,

That with fit meats our bodies be sustain'd ;

But to decay they both alike shall yield,

As the frail grass upon the flowery field.

Vile is the vice to ply th' incessant bowl,

Till the strong fumes o'erwhelm the struggling
soul ;

Or Nature, sated with her thirsty toils,
Sick and o'ercharg'd at the full draught recoils.
Oft, faith th' Apostle, I've with heartfelt pain
Before declar'd, and now declare again,
That, Christians though in name, not few are those,
Who to the holy cross are fiercest foes ;
These shall o'ertake destruction's iron rod,
Whose pride's their shame, whose belly is their God.
O thou foul member of our mortal frame !
Who may thy vile corruptions dare to name ?
Behold ! the cooks on the great work intent,
Converting substance into accident !
By day, by night, they labour to fulfil
The captious cravings of thy liquorish will.
Now grating saws the stubborn bones divide,
That the soft marrow down the throat may glide :
Fish, flesh, and fowl with cunning art they take,
And from the mixture various sauces make ;
Spices and roots improve the gross delight,
And still create a newer appetite :
But dead to virtue is that abject mind,
Which to such pleasures deigns to be resign'd.
Wine is the bane of worth, and drunkenness
Is full of striving and of wretchedness.

O drunken

O drunken man ! disfigur'd is thy face,
 Sour is thy breath, foul art thou to embrace :
 Like a stuck swine thou to the earth dost fall,
 Thy speech, thy wit, thy senses vanish'd all ;
 Or, if thou speak'st, 'tis only to reveal
 That which thy sober sense would most conceal.
 Heav'n keep you, friends, with its peculiar care,
 And of the baneful practice each beware :
 But chiefly of the treacherous wine of Lepe *,
 Renown'd in Fish-street, and in neighbouring
 Chepe :
 For, fraught with subtle power, the wines of
 Spain
 Insidious creep t' assail the maddening brain :

* According to the geographers, Lepe was not far from Cadiz. This wine, of whatever sort it may have been, was probably much stronger than the Gascon wines usually drunk in England. Spanish wines might also be more alluring upon account of their greater rarity. Among the orders of the royal household in 1604, is the following ; [Ms. Harl. 293. fol. 162.] " And whereas
 " in tymes past, Spanish wines, called sacke, were little or noe
 " whit used in our courte, and that in later years, though not
 " of ordinary allowance, it was thought convenient that noble-
 " men, &c. might have a boule or glasse, &c. we understanding
 " that it is now used as common drink, &c. reduce the allow-
 " ance to 12 gallons a day for the court, &c."—TYR-
 WHITT, ver. 12497.

Three draughts at most the thoughtless victim takes,
Then vanquish'd reason quick her post forsakes,
And as the potent fumes successive rise,
Illusive visions dance before his eyes ;
Spain's towering hills his heated fancy views,
And his frail step the phantom vain pursues.

Think on the feats of high renown, that shine
In the fair record of the book divine :

'Twas not the fever of the pamper'd feast,
But vigorous abstinence the sinews brac'd ;
This the purg'd soul with unknown ardour fir'd,
And actions more than human oft inspir'd.

Impetuous Attila, the scourge of Rome,
Fell by intemperate joys at length o'ercome.

Thus the wise mother to her royal son :

“ The joys of treach'rous wine with horror shun ;

“ For white-rob'd Justice, heav'nly maid, alone

“ Can add true splendour to the glitt'ring throne.

“ But, oh ! my Lemuel, where's the heart so pure,

“ Whose justice wine's strong fumes may ne'er ob-
scure ?”

Yet is not wine the only foe we find,
That aims destruction at th' ingenuous mind ;
Gaming, infectious pest, corrupts the age,
And day by day spreads wide her baneful rage.

Parent

Parent of dire distress, destructive fiend !
What hideous furies on thy steps attend !
Unpitied Penury, and fraudulent Guile,
Hell-born Deceit, with ever practis'd smile !
And idiot Blasphemy his front uprears,
High Heaven he mocks, and laughs at slavish fears ;
And fell Self-Murder slowly stalks behind,
The last sad refuge of the hopeless mind.

Far from her noisy haunts flies honest Fame,
And marks with lasting blot each recreant name
Of him, whose sordid and ignoble soul
Yields to so base a tyrant's stern controul :
But those dishonour's foulest stains await,
Who high in dignity are plac'd by fate,
But fair distinction's envied post decline,
And each bright hope for gaming's joys resign.
And if the breasts of kings her empire own,
Lost is at once the splendour of the throne.
Erewhile to Corinth hardy Sparta sent
Chilon, a sage renown'd, with fix'd intent,
That the two states in friendly union tied
No craft might weaken, and no force divide.
But when the chiefs among the Spartan came,
And found that hazard's keen eventful game

M 3

Alone

Alone their minds employ'd; " My noble race
" Ne'er shall," he said, " so vile a work debase,
" As with such friends my country to ally;
" Rather than this, ye fates, with joy I'll die."

Thus Parthia's monarch, hoping to reclaim
From gaming's rage Demetrius' sullied name,
To him an embassy indignant sent,
Two dice in scornful mockery to present.
And sure great lords may find some worthier play,
To drive the slow and joyless hours away.

'Tis from this fertile seed-bed oaths arise,
And their long train of foul impieties;
For thus th' Evangelist aloud declares,
He God's high laws offends, who idly swears.
To this the prophet's holy words accord,
Swear if thou dost, maintain thy sacred word:
In the first table of the dread commands,
Second in order this great mandate stands,
" * Take not my name in vain ;" this law precedes
That which forbids man's most flagitious deeds,

* I cannot here omit remarking the keenness of Chaucer's satire, who, in drawing the picture of an ignorant and unprincipled Priest, makes him misquote the Commandments—the third for the second.

And

And him shall vengeance' keenest stroke o'ertake,
Whose tongue rebellious dares its force to break.

But to my promis'd tale—The early sound
Of matins had not yet been heard around,

When at the tavern the boon friends had met,

(The bowl before them in due order set)

Meantime a passing funeral's well-known knell

Toll'd a departed brother's last farewell.

On this the boy they call, intent to know

The hapless object of such early woe :

"Well did ye know him, firs," the boy replied,

"And but this night your old associate died :

"Near him the caitif Death unheeded drew,

"And drunk and helpless like a coward flew.

"Thousands and thousands hath the pest before

"Sent unrelenting to the Stygian shore.

"You, then, my masters, of his stroke beware,

"And for so dire a foe in time prepare."

Then one with aspect grave replied, "The youth

"Hath well, my friends, describ'd the mournful
truth.

"Near to this spot a village drear I know,

"(The saddest picture of unbounded woe)

M 4

"There

" There hath the tyrant slain of every age,
 " Woman, and man, and child, and hind, and page;
 " And well our care he claims, for much I fear,
 " Since he hath fix'd his dark abode so near."

" Shame on your fears," a bravo bold replies;
 " I scorn the caitif, and his pow'r despise;
 " And I will restless hunt each lane and street,
 " So that the dreaded foe at length I meet.
 " Come now, my boys, we three our oaths will
 plight,
 " Our force against the tyrant to unite,
 " And he shall ne'er survive th' approaching night.

" Agreed," with hearty voice, they each reply'd,
 " Nought shall henceforth our cordial souls divide."
 Then up in drunken rage they furious start,
 And for the village all in haste depart;
 And loud they swear, elate with frantic joy,
 Death, should they meet him, they will quick de-
 stroy.

When they had gone not fully half a mile,
 Right in the pathway, as they reach'd a stile,
 An aged man they met, in mean array—
 " Save you, good lords," he said, and meekly gave
 the way.

Him

Him then the boldest of the three address'd,

"Wretch that thou art, by double griefs oppress'd,

"By age bent down, not less than carking care,

"Wherefore so long dost thou such misery bear?"

Then rais'd the aged man his feeble eye,

And in his visage look'd, and made reply :

"It is, good sir, for this, I may not find,

"Were I to roam to Afric or to Ind,

"Or earth's remotest confines should I range,

"One that for these white locks his youth would
change.

"Keep then I must time's heavy burden still,

"And patient wait for Heav'n's all-righteous will :

"E'en greedy Death, how much soe'er I grieve,

"Will not, though proffer'd, yet my life receive.

"Here at my mother Earth's deaf, fullen gate,

"My staff, sad sole support, early and late,

"Knocks with incessant stroke, but knocks in vain,

"For nought she hears, though sadly I complain.

"But, sirs, small proof of courtesy appears,

"When vaunting youth insults declining years ;

"Cast but your eyes on scripture's hallow'd page,

"There shall ye learn to reverence hoary age.

" If

"If then full days ye wish yourselves to see,

"Ah! do not throw reviling taunts on me.

"But may kind Heaven protect you all, I pray:

"I needs must onward hold my slow and painful way."

"That shall you not, old churl," with saucy tone,
The hazardor replies, "by holy John:

"The hated traitor Death I heard thee name;

"Long has the fiend to me been known by fame.

"To him our friends have daily fall'n a prey,

"And wide the country round his victims lay:

"Quick to his lurking hole my footsteps lead,

"Or instant vengeance waits thy palsied head."

"Sirs!" then the man replied, "if you to find

"All-powerful Death so strongly are inclin'd,

"Let but that crooked path direct your feet,

"And then the wish'd-for foe ye sure shall meet:

"For in that grove that rears its head so high,

"I late beheld him as I passed by.

"See you yon oak that towers above the wood?

"Beneath its wide-extended shade he stood;

"And there he'll wait, my honest word believe,

"Nor shall th' event your glowing hopes deceive."

Then

Then to the tree with eager haste they flew,
There wonders strange their wild attention drew ;
For there in heaps their ravish'd eyes behold
Bushels of florins, all of purest gold.
Charm'd with the view, of Death they think no more,
But bend in raptures o'er the glittering store :
Then he whose wily soul above the rest
Dark craft had warp'd, his comrades thus address'd :
" Brethren," he cries, " to what I speak attend ;
" Loose though my life, I counsel sage can lend :
" Fortune hath deign'd this unhop'd wealth to give,
" That we henceforth may gay and jovial live ;
" And surely gold so found should quickly fly,
" If mirth and jollity we thus may buy.
" But till we hence convey the glittering prize,
" In vain we view it with delighted eyes ;
" By day we dare not tempt the public view,
" Left foul suspicion should our deeds pursue ;
" Beneath all-conscious night's protecting shade,
" Must the rich spoil in safety be convey'd ;
" By joint consent be fix'd th' impartial law,
" That each in fair succession lots shall draw ;
" Then of the three, by lot adjudg'd, shall one
" Quick to the town with prompt compliance run,
" Wine

"Wine and refreshment various to obtain,

"The while the gold to watch the two remain."

The point agreed, he then with specious care
The lots in order hastens to prepare;
And thus it chanc'd, the least the youngest drew,
And instant to the town obedient flew:

'Twas then the crafty knave, who first propos'd
The chance of lots, his deep-laid scheme disclos'd.

"Brother, to thee, I trust, it well is known,
"That I regard thy interest as my own.
"This gold, that's here display'd in glittering pride,
"Thou know'st three equal portions shall divide:
"But if I now should tell, and tell thee true,
"How these three portions we might bring to two,
"And only thou and I divide the whole;
"Should not I prove the friendship of my soul?
"Our comrade's gone refreshments to prepare—
"Let then us two the precious treasure share!"

"How shall that be?" the other then replied,
"How may we hope the fraud from him to hide,
"If only we the glorious prize divide?" }
"Canst thou," the villain said, "a secret keep,
"And let my counsel in thy bosom sleep?"

"That

"That can I promise safe; nor night nor day,
He said, "shall e'er thy confidence betray."

"Now then attend; if both at once assail
"His single strength, it surely soon shall fail.
"Thou first in wrestling shalt his skill defy,
"And as in sport his strength with thine shall try;
"Then with sure aim my dagger's point behind
"Shall through his loins a ready entrance find:
"And when he's down, thy hand, from struggling
freed,

"The stroke may second, and complete the deed.
"Then all this gold shall truly parted be,
"My dearest friend, 'twixt only you and me:
"Then may we each indulge our warmest will,
"And have of dice, and cards, and drink our fill."
Thus did those two, for thirst of murderous gain,
Devote their absent comrade to be slain.

Meantime the youth, who to the town was sent,
On the new florins all his thoughts had bent:
"Oh! would the fates," he said, "my wishes bless,
"That I alone might all this gold possess;
"Beneath Heaven's canopy there none should be,
"Who in mirth's gay delights should vie with me."

Then

Then to his tainted soul th' insidious fiend,
Man's watchful foe, his aid began to lend :
Of poison's subtle power the thought infus'd,
And how the potent medicine should be us'd.
Then to a well-known leech he quick repairs,
To buy the drug that ends all human cares.
With semblance dark he tells a tale distress'd,
How hosts of rats his plunder'd barn infest ;
How night by night his fatted capons lay
Mangled and torn, the villain polecat's prey :
Therefore he begs some tried and certain cure,
That may from vermin's rage his house secure.
The leech reply'd, " I pleas'd obey your will,
" And quick the destin'd purpose will fulfil :
" Behold this drug ; there lives not man so strong,
" Whose being art most potent may prolong,
" Should but he taste of it a single grain :
" For ere a mile thou'dst walk upon the plain,
" Thou sure should'st find him cold and breathless
lay,

" Ne'er to behold again the face of day."

The fatal gift he takes with eager joy,
Then through the streets, impatient to employ

Its

Its promis'd powers, he to the tavern hastes ;
There, his design to aid, rich wines he tastes,
Mixes the poison with the luscious draught,
Then in two bottles puts with treach'rous craft
The deadly potion, whilst a third contains
The wine unmix'd and pure that yet remains.

Now to the wood all joyous he returns ;
With thirst of promis'd wealth his bosom burns :
But, ah ! superior force his craft defies ;
His comrades both beset him, and he dies.

This done, the one whose hard and ruthless heart
First urg'd his friend to play a murderer's part,
Thus silence broke—" Away with coward fear !
" Now with gay wine," he says, " and jovial cheer,
" Let first our hearts be warm'd, and then the grave
" The corpse its destin'd prize may duly crave."
Then takes the wine, and (so just fate ordain'd)
The poison'd flask into a bowl he drain'd ;
Quaff'd the dire beverage, and with heart'ning smile
Gave it his friend, his terrors to beguile.
But soon they both its noxious vapours found,
And lifeless sunk extended on the ground.
Thus fell they all (so will'd Heaven's just decree)
The victims of their deep-laid villainy.

Ah !

Ah! what is man? when his corrupted soul
Yields to debasing sin's uncheck'd controul!
First senseless drunkenness his passions fires,
Then rise tumultuous strong and fierce desires;
These urge him on to each atrocious deed,
Till to fell murder's crime at length they lead.
The slave of sin, his heart no mercy knows,
Him he ne'er thinks of to whom all he owes,
From whom health, strength, and life, and every
 blessing flows.

Now, gentle sirs! may Heaven your faults
 amend!

But chief from avarice' baleful sin defend!
Let each bring spoons or rings with grateful heart,
And to your Pardoner of your hoards impart!
Let each gay wife, if she would save her soul,
Bring me her wool, and instant in my roll
In fairest characters her name I'll place,
And she shall sure receive forgiveness' grace.
Come then! your offerings bring, and here as clean
As if ye ne'er by sin had tainted been,
I'll straight absolve you from the guilty load,
And lead you safe to Heav'n's all blest'd abode;

For

For in my tale, good firs, I this forgot—
Pardons and relics in my pouch I've got;
Myself receiv'd them from the sacred hand
Of th' holy Father; nor does England's land
Produce a fairer shew: ye then that please,
Here on the ground devout with bended knees,
If sins your wounded consciences aggrieve,
Sweet absolution from my hands receive!
Unless ye better like, as on ye go,
(For in so long a journey sins will grow)
Careful to take a pardon fresh for each,
At every town that in our way we reach:
But then forget not, friends, if this ye do,
Each time fresh pence to give both good and true.
Great is your comfort, that among you here
Ye have so good and kind a Pardoner;
Who's still at hand as on your way ye ride,
At each mishap that may by chance betide.
Who knows but from his horse, of wine o'erfull,
Some hapless wight may fall, and break his skull?
And then what blest security 'twould be,
Mongst you to have a friend assur'd like me!
If right I guess, our Host shall first begin,
For surely he's envelop'd most in sin.

Come then, sir Host, your humble offering bring,
And every relic, every holy thing.

Give me one groat, and for a price so small
Shall your unholy lips e'en kiss them all.

"Nay," quoth the Host, "no relics, I beseech;
"As well might I salute thy reverend breech;
"And thou a relic of some saint might'st name,
"The part which modest nature hides in shame.
"But by the sacred Cross St. Helen found*,
"Would that my purse with coilons did abound!
"Then holy relics would I all despise,
"And the dear current coin alone I'd prize."

Not one word more the Pardoner deigns return,
But his fierce eyes all wild with anger burn.
Then said the Host, "No longer will I jest
"With one whose captious temper's so confess'd."

On this the Knight, a mild and worthy man,
Anxious to heal dispute, to speak began.

"Pardoner," he says, "let soft forgiveness swage
"The warm effusions of thy causeless rage:
"Mirth to promote is all our Host intends;
"Give each his hand then, and again be friends!"

Thus did they each salute in friendly mood,
And cheerful all their destin'd way pursu'd.

* Sir J. Mandeville, c. vii. p. 93.—TYRWHITT, ver. 12885.

PROLOGUE

TO THE

SHIPMAN'S TALE.

THEN high mine Host upon his stirrups stands,
In act to issue forth his dread commands :

"This was a goodly tale in truth," he says,

"And well deserves our liking, and our praise :

"You then, fir parish priest, in turn prepare,

"For, by God's bones, some good and learned fare

"We all from you with anxious fondness wait ;

"Grant then our wish, and quick your tale relate."

"Bless me !" the Parson answers, "how you
swear !"

"Ah !" said mine Host, "good Jenkin ! are you there ?

"I smell a * Lollard in the wind," quoth he :

"Oh ! what a tiresome sermon his will be !"

"Nay,

* This is in character, as appears from a treatise of the time
(Harl. Catal. n. 1666) : "Now in Engelond it is a comun pro-
"testioun ayens persecutioun—if a man is customable to swere
"nedeles, and fals, and unavised, by the bones, nailes, and sides

180 PROLOGUE TO THE SHIPMAN'S TALE.

"Nay, by my father's soul, he shall not preach,
The Shipman says; "nor gospel strange shall teach.
"We all in God's almighty power believe,
"Nor will we texts new-vamp'd for old receive.
"Therefore, mine Host, myself the next shall be,
"To claim the hearing of the company;
"And take my word, my good and jovial friends,
"None here shall doze before my story ends:
"But well be ye assur'd, my tale will be
"Undeck'd with lore of sage philosophy,
"Or phyfic quaint, or terms of crabbed law—
"Of Latin there's full little in my maw."

"and other membres of Crist, and to absteine fro othes nedeles
"and unlesful—and reprove sinne by way of charite, is mater
"and cause now why prelates and sum lordes sclaundren men,
"and clepen hem Lollardes, Eretikes, &c."

TYRWHITT, ver. 1291. vol. iii.

THE

THE SHIPMAN'S TALE.

A Merchant at St. Dennis liv'd of yore,
 Wife was he deem'd, for wealthy was his store;
 Mirthful and gay, and much by all carefs'd;
 A beauteous wife his tasty choice had blest'd:
 Yet who of revels gay may count the cost?
 Short is the fleeting joy, and soon is lost.
 But woe to him, whose purse low drain'd and light
 Must feel the charges of the festal night!
 Wives must be clad in gay and new array,
 And husbands ne'er are thought of, but to pay:
 'Tis them to honour, that in dance and song
 Trip the light hours, and gayly glide along;
 And if by chance the mean uncourteous lord
 Cannot, or will not, such expence afford,
 Then (perilous adventure) must some friend
 To the fair debtor kind assistance lend.

This Merchant kept a house of great resort,
 And daily crowded was his spacious court:
 There all degrees and ranks in throngs repair,
 His board was sumptuous, and his wife was fair.

But 'mong the rest the chief a Monk appears,
Fair was his face, and blooming were his years;
Mild was his aspect, courteous was his mien,
And thirty winters scarce he yet had seen:
Long to each other, e'en from childhood, known,
The good man's friendship now had rooted grown,
And the Monk us'd his table as his own: }
Of each it chanc'd the birth-place was the same;
This led the Monk relationship to claim;
The friendly Merchant ne'er the claim denied,
But proofs of kindness new each day supplied:
At length they swore, they both would firm remain,
Join'd, long as life endur'd, in friendship's sacred
chain.

Frank and munificent Dan John was deem'd,
And much for nobleness of soul esteem'd;
For, skill'd in bribery's resistless art,
Successful through the house he play'd his part;
He knew each groom and lacquey by his name,
And fee'd them, high and low, whene'er he came.

It chanc'd at length, preparing to depart,
For crowded Bruges' great and well-known mart,
To his good friend, Dan John, the Merchant sent,
To give him notice of his fix'd intent;

And

And begg'd him to his house forthwith to come,
And pass some days ere yet he went from home.

Scarce did the Monk the Merchant's call receive,
Ere he with ease obtain'd his abbot's leave ;
For in his convent much Dan John was lov'd,
For worth and prudence well by all approv'd.
His was the charge its wide domains t' o'erlook,
And of its interests full good care he took.

Now at the Merchant's house Dan John arrives,
And each to give him kindest welcome strives.
With him, to grace St. Dennis' sumptuous fare,
He brings two casks of wine, of flavour rare ;
And, as he's wont, in joy and mirthful play
Drinks, eats, and laughs the pleasant hours away.

Thus had two days in mirth and joy been pass'd,
But, ah ! nor mirth nor joy may ever last ;
On the third morn, intent on weightier cares,
The prudent Merchant all his books prepares, }
T' inspect with wonted caution his affairs.
Pent in his closet close, and barr'd the door,
He with due care weighs well his various store.

Meantime at early dawn Dan John arose,
And to the garden's airy terrace goes.

Long he had not been there, ere to him came
The Merchant's wife, the gay and buxom dame :
" Ah ! cousin John," she exclaims with feign'd sur-
prise,

" Wherefore is this, thus early that you rise ?"

" Five hours of rest, fair niece," he smiling says,

" The daily toil of nature well repays

" In those, whose hearts no vexing cares corrode,

" Or conscious guilt's intolerable load.

" But why dost thou, good niece, so pale appear ?

" Or thou art sick, or else, full much I fear,

" Some dire disaster, or some wild affright,

" Hath kept thine eyes from slumber all the night."

" Ah !" she replies, " the world but little knows

" My daily sorrows, and my nameless woes ;

" And soon I hence must fly, or life must end ;

" For ah ! what's life to her, who knows no friend ?"

" Weep not," the Monk replied, " dear lovely fair ;

" Nor yield thy soul a prey to dark despair :

" Confide thy sorrows to my faithful breast,

" And trust that there deep buried they shall rest :

" Slight not th' advice of one, thou know'st thy friend ;

" If aid I may not, counsel I may lend ;

" And,

"And, on this book I swear, life's latest day

"Shall ne'er my faith corrupt thy secrets to betray."

"To you, dear friend Dan John," replied the
dame,

"Here on this sacred book I swear the same ;

"And, rather than betray thee, I will bear,

"That men should limb from limb my carcase tear.

"Thou know'st," the dame begins, "Dan John,
full well,

"The time allows not, else, oh ! I could tell

"Such tales of hardships, which I long have felt,

"As soon would make thy pitying heart to melt ;

"And, though thy cousin, and though sighs are vain,

"'Tis of my husband that I thus complain."

"Cousin," the Monk with smiles replied, "to me !

"No more than is yon leaf upon the tree.

"That I him thus have call'd, I own, is true ;

"But, ah ! the cause, sweet dame, was only you.

"Blame not the lie, my love, for thee inspir'd ;

"Near thee to live was all that I desir'd :

"Then ere thy husband comes, thy griefs impart,

"And ease the troubles of thy labouring heart."

"My dearest friend Dan John," the lady cried,

"Would that the sad recital I might hide !

"But

" But sure, since time began, there ne'er was seen
" A wretch so vile, so hateful, and so mean :
" Yet 'mongst the various wants that I endure,
" The want of cash is what I least can cure.
" Women, you know full well, expect to find
" Their husbands generous, rich, and wise, and kind;
" So is not mine : yet on a certain day,
" His honour to maintain, I needs must pay
" An hundred franks ; my sacred word is pass'd,
" Which if I break, that hour shall be my last.
" Lend me then, dear Dan John, these hundred franks,
" And, trust me, you shall earn my warmest thanks."
" Madam," he said, " so much I feel your grief,
" That here I swear to bring you quick relief;
" And, when your husband's gone from hence away,
" Doubt not the franks I'll bring, the debt to pay :
" Now go," he said, " and let us quickly dine ;
" Be to your promise true, as I to mine."
" That will I do," she says, with joyous air,
Then homeward hastens, dinner to prepare :
This done, to rouse her husband next she goes,
And at his door she knocks with sounding blows.
" Wherefore," she says, " thus endless do you pore
" O'er musty books, and dead, and useless store ?

" Think

"Think you Dan John the live-long day can fast?

"Come down and dine; the hour's already past."

"Wife," he replied, in meek and soothing tone,

"Little to you a merchant's cares are known;

"Misfortunes daily thwart our honest pains,

"And nameless losses lessen all our gains:

"Well then we need of ills like these beware,

"Bless'd if we 'scape them by unceasing care.

"Soon as to-morrow's sun awakes the day,

"To noted Bruges I must bend my way:

"Wherefore, I humbly pray thee, ere I go,

"Thine utmost prudence on my house bestow:

"Well is it stor'd with all thy needs require;

"Use it with care is all that I desire.

"Money thou shalt not want, thy purse I'll fill,

"Rule but with prudence, and enjoy thy will."

This having said, he shuts each well-stor'd box,

And with due caution fast the door he locks;

And, having said a hasty mass, prepares

At his well-furnish'd board to drown his cares.

Now watch'd the Monk the soft unguarded hour,

When the gay glass had wrought its genial power;

"Believe me, best of friends," he says, "my heart

"Sinks with unfeign'd regret, whene'er we part:

"Oft

- " Oft I reflect, what ills may you betide ;
" Mind then with special caution how you ride :
" Watch too your diet, sparing be your meat,
" Ill suits repletion with the dog day's heat.
" Say, can I serve you, while from home you stay ?
" Freely command me, or by night or day ;
" To all my cautions due observance lend,
" And may kind Heaven protect you to the end.
" Yet, ere you go, I've this request to make,
" That you will lend me, for our friendship's sake,
" An hundred franks ; and trust me, on the day
" You name yourself, the favour I'll repay.
" For, truth to speak, our convent to supply,
" Some beasts my duty calls me soon to buy ;
" But ne'er, I pray you, the transaction tell :
" Then best and dearest friend, once more farewell !"
The Merchant then return'd this kind reply,
" How can I, friend, so small a suit deny ?
" Freely, the whole I have, your wants command ;
" Take what you list, nor take with sparing hand.
" One thing I need not say, for well 'tis known,
" The life of trade depends on wealth alone :
" Pay then, when best you may, what here I lend ;
" My purse assists well pleas'd so lov'd a friend."

Instant

Instant the hundred franks the Merchant gives,
Not with more joy the Monk the boon receives,
Who to his abbey now directs his way,
Pleas'd with the bright success, that crown'd the day.

On the next morn the Merchant had begun
His destin'd journey with the rising sun :
With him an honest mate, and sober guide,
His faithful 'prentice, ever us'd to ride :
Bruges they reach, and there without delay
(For ne'er his time he gave to dance, or play)
His destin'd purpose careful he pursues,
And with nice eye each chapman's ware he views.

On the next Sunday to St. Dennis came,
Fresh shorn and gay, Dan John, to see the dame :
There for the hundred franks she yields her charms,
Th' expected payment, to his longing arms.
Yet was so high this crafty Monk esteem'd,
That chaste and virtuous he by all was deem'd.

The Merchant now, when ended was the fair,
Homeward bethinks him quickly to repair :
Thither arriv'd, with joy his wife he meets,
And gay and jocund every friend he greets ;
Yet, as of costly price the goods he found,
He in agreement firm himself had bound,

The

The part remaining, on a certain day,
(Th' amount full twenty thousand crowns) to pay.
This sum, the object now of all his cares,
Forthwith to raise, to Paris he repairs ;
But first (for thus a good and gentle mind
Friendship's nice laws before all others bind)
His eager footsteps to the convent fly ;
There for Dan John he looks with anxious eye,
Not from his friend t' obtain the wanted gold,
His warmer-heart but wishes to behold,
Now after absence, him his soul esteems,
Far more than happiest miser's golden dreams.

Him with professions warm Dan John receiv'd,
And he, as true as warm, them all believ'd :
Then he began more fully to recount
What ware he'd purchas'd, and how great th'
amount ;

Which to defray, again from home he'd come,
In hopes in Paris he might raise the sum.

" Believe," the Monk replied, " my joy sincere,

" That safe return'd again I see thee here ;

" Much I rejoice, to view thy blooming health,

" Nor less thy prospect of increasing wealth ;

" And,

"And, could I lend the sum thy wants require,
"No greater pleasure would my soul desire ;
"For well my mind recalls the generous aid
"You lent to me, which lately I repay'd
"To your fair wife, as she to you will tell ;
"For she, I'm sure, the fact remembers well.
"But, by your leave, I can no longer stay,
"For I must join our abbot on his way :
"Greet well our dame belov'd, mine own niece sweet,
"And farewell, cousin dear, till next we meet."

The Merchant now obtain'd what he desir'd,
And rais'd by loan the sum his wants requir'd ;
This in some Lombard's hands he quick bestows,
And takes of them their bond for all he owes :
Blithe as a bird, he homeward bends his way,
For well he knew he stood in such array,
That, by the venture, costs and labour paid,
A thousand franks would bless his thriving trade.

His wife, for so was wont the duteous dame,
First to the gate to meet her husband came ;
Nor with more glee he e'er her smiles had met,
For rich he was, and clearly out of debt.

Yet he forgot not in her ear to tell
The words that from Dan John at Paris fell :

" In

"In truth, sweet wife," he said, "thou'rt much to blame,

"And might'st have caus'd me undeserved shame;

"For it would forely much my soul have griev'd,

"To have ask'd a payment, once before receiv'd:

"Ne'er then in future fail, I humbly pray,

"To tell me, if by chance, while I'm away,

"To thee a debtor should his portion pay."

Fearless return'd the dame with quick reply,

"The false, th' audacious traitor I defy.

"One day some cash he brought to me, 'tis true,

"Wherefore I ne'er enquir'd, nor with what view;

"A gift I deem'd it, out of love to you;

"And small enough it was, for the good cheer

"He hath so oft enjoy'd so freely here.

"But since I see on me the debt is laid,

"Trust me, sweet spouse, it shall be strictly paid;

"Not in base coin, such vulgar souls employ,

"With love I'll pay thee, and without alloy:

"Then be not wrath, since here the truth I own,

"For not in needless waste the gold is flown,

"But, thee to honour, it is all apply'd,

"On pearls, and lace, and fifty things beside:

"Now,

"Now then, best, dearest comfort of my life,
"Kiss, and forgive thy fond and faithful wife!"
The merchant found the grievance past redress,
And knew that chiding would not make it less;
Wifely he pardon'd what he could not mend,
And his wife promis'd she'd no more offend.

PROLOGUE

TO

THE PRIORESS'S TALE.

LONG, gentle Sailor, faith our jolly Host,
 May'st thou in safety sail along the coast !
 But ill, my masters all, your peace betide !
 If in your houses Monks like this reside.
 Now gentles, 'mongst ye all, which shall I find,
 That the next tale to tell is most inclin'd ?
 Then mild and courteous, as a modest maid,
 To the meek Prioress these words he said :
 " From you, sweet lady, may I humbly crave,
 " If so it like you, the next tale to have ?"
 " Gladly," she said, " I'll please you, if I can ;"
 And, when they all were silent, thus began.

THE PRIORESS'S TALE.

LORD of all power and might! thy glorious
name

All things in heaven and earth alike proclaim;
And not the wise alone thy fame declare,
But babes and sucklings in thy praises share.
E'en I, with warm desire to sound thy praise,
Will boldly strive my feeble voice to raise;
Nor thine alone, but her, thy mother dear,
My tale shall laud. O deign, bright Maid, to hear!
Thou Gem of purity! thou virgin Flower!
On whom in dove-like form th' eternal Power
Descended, by thy humble meekness won,
And bade thee sinless hail a heav'n-born Son!
Where is the tongue so skill'd that e'er may tell,
What nameless virtues in thy bosom dwell?
Oft, ere the words from our warm lips are sent,
Thy pitying kindness does our prayers prevent.
O lovely Queen! O bright heav'n-favour'd Maid!
Grant to thy suppliant thy all-potent aid!
For powers so mean, so infantine as mine,
Ill suit the grandeur of a theme divine.

Of yore a city stood on Asia's plains
 ('Though time hath since destroy'd its last remains)
 With Christians fill'd, to fame it long had grown,
 And far and wide its splendid name was known.
 In it one street (a fair and noble space)
 Its lord assign'd to Abram's worldly race;
 For stores of wealth the cunning despot knew
 Would soon be found, where dwelt the usurious Jew.
 At the far end, upon a plot of green,
 Neat and compact, a little school was seen;
 To this repair'd the infant Christian tribe,
 Instruction's early lessons to imbibe:
 'Mong these a widow's son, who day by day
 Pass'd through to school, nor ever stopp'd to play;
 When the bless'd Virgin's image e'er appear'd,
 With bended knees the sacred form rever'd.
 His mind by early grace aright endued,
 Constant his mother's precepts he pursued;
 And, like St. Nicholas *, to the holy Maid
 From earliest infancy due homage paid.

* We have an account of the very early piety of this saint in his lesson—Brev. Roman. vi. Decemb. Cujus viri sanctitas quanta futura esset jam ab incunabulis apparuit; nam infans cum reliquos dies lac nutricis frequens fugeret, quartâ et sextâ feriâ

Oft, while the well-taught choir their voices rais'd,
 And the great Saviour's virgin Mother prais'd,
 Wrapp'd in attention mute the child would stand,
 (His book unheeded falling from his hand)
 And as he durst, he drew him near and near,
 (For keen delight had banish'd boyish fear)
 Now caught the words, and now th' harmonious note,
 Till the first verse at length he gain'd by rote.

Nought did he know, what sense the words convey'd,

For which full oft his school-fellow he pray'd,
 On his bare knees besought him to explain,
 In his own language, what the words contain.

His playmate then, who older was than he,
 "All that I can," replied, "I'll tell thee free.
 "This song was made, as oft I've heard them say,
 "To our dear Lady honour due to pay,
 "And her to beg, her soothing grace to lend,
 "When we approach life's short and destin'd end:
 "Here's all I know, to sing is mine alone,
 "Grammar's quaint art to me is little known."

*feriâ (on Wednesdays and Fridays) semel duntaxat idque vesperi
 fugebat.—TYRWHITT, ver. 13444.*

“ And was this song indeed,” the urchin said,
“ To honour Christ’s heav’n-chosen Mother made ?
“ Then night and day I’ll strive with ceaseless pain,
“ Ere Christmas comes, the sacred words to gain,
“ Though all unlearn’d my primer should remain : }
“ For her to honour, joyful I would bear,
“ Thrice in an hour, correction’s stripes to share.”

Thus, by his playmate taught, more perfect grown,
He the whole hymn at length had made his own ;
And as he pass’d each day along the street,
Both morn and eve the words would he repeat.
’Twas then the Power accurs’d, the foe of man,
Hatred’s fell rancour round to spread began :
“ Is it, O Jews,” he whisper’d, “ to be borne,
“ That a mere child shall brave your beards with scorn ?
“ And in your ears shall daily found a name,
“ That heaps your ancient honour’d law with shame ? ”
Soon their fell gall the venom’d words diffuse,
And rouse to vengeance the indignant Jews ;
The child they doom to death ; and soon procure
A murderer vile, their purpose to ensure.
In a dark alley plac’d his stand he took,
And watch’d the victim with impatient look ;

And

And as the guileless infant pass'd along,
 And sooth'd his spirit with his favourite song,
 On him he seiz'd, and reckless infant flew,
 And in a sewer his mangled body threw.
 But vain's the hope deeds deadly to conceal;
 Murder's fell crime will sure itself reveal*.

In vain the mother waits the tedious night,
 In vain expects him with returning light;
 He comes no more; distracted out she flies,
 And in each corner of the city pries:
 But the sad sole relief her search obtains,
 (Solace full small for all her anxious pains)
 Is, that at evening, when from school he pass'd,
 He in the Jewry had been seen the last.

* In St. Peter's church (at Trent) they shew the chapel of Little St. Simon, and say, that in 1276 the Jews stole one Simonin, or Little Simon, a shoemaker's son, in the 28th month of his age, and, after having killed the child in a most cruel manner, to drink his blood at one of their feasts, threw his carcass into a water-pipe, which now passes to the house where it is pretended this murder was committed, and where their synagogue was at that time; but the body being carried from thence into the river, was found by some fishermen; when the affair being discovered, thirty-nine of the Jews were executed, and the rest banished the city for ever. Pope Sixtus IV. canonized the child. The same story is painted at Francfort on the Maine, under the bridge gate.—*World Displayed*, v. 18. *Misson's Travels*.

Urg'd by that pang, that keen and poignant smart,
That only thrills the tender mother's heart,
She search'd with ceaseless toil each place around,
Where her fond hope presag'd he might be found,
Calling, as on she went, the heavenly Maid
Her warm desires and anxious quest to aid.
To search among the Jews at length she's wrought,
For every spot besides in vain she sought.
Each Jew she ask'd with fond and earnest prayer,
If he had seen her lovely infant there.
Each nay replied : but her prophetic soul,
Illum'd by sacred truth's divine controul,
Loos'd her bold tongue ; and, " Here," aloud she cried,
" My child's conceal'd, 'twas here my darling died !"
'Twas then the Power Supreme, who oft descends
T' effect by smallest means his wisest ends,
Ordain'd that to the blessed Virgin's praise
This murder'd child again his voice should raise,
And from the noisome pit with fever'd throat
Should chant his favourite anthem's well-known note.

Mov'd by the infant's cries, so clear and loud,
The Christians gather'd in a wond'ring crowd ;
The provost soon they call'd, who instant came,
And, having reverence paid to th' holy name

Of

Of Christ our Lord, and of the Virgin pure,
Bade them in durance safe the Jews secure.
Rais'd from his murky grave with pious care,
To the next abbey thence the child they bear :
Still, as the sad procession moves along,
Still (strange to tell) he chants th' unceasing song ;
Whilst, Rachel like, upon the mournful bier
The mother pours the unavailing tear ;
O'ercome with grief she faints ; with pious care
Home her sad friends th' unconscious sufferer bear.

With vengeance just the provost now pursues
Each vile accomplice of the murderous Jews,
And with wild horses each asunder draws,
The hopeless victims to th' offended laws.

Now is the bier, with mournful ensigns grac'd,
In usual pomp before the altar plac'd ;
Then, mass perform'd, the choir with solemn care
For the last sad accustom'd rites prepare ;
But instant as they pour'd the holy water,
He sang, " O ! alma Redemptoris Mater ! "

The holy abbot then, for such was he,
(At least such rev'rend abbots ought to be)
The murder'd child with suppliant voice address'd,
And in these words his earnest prayer express'd :

" Child,

Urg'd by that pang, that keen and poignant smart,
That only thrills the tender mother's heart,
She search'd with ceaseless toil each place around,
Where her fond hope presag'd he might be found,
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And in these words his earnest prayer express'd :

" Child,

" Child, I conjure thee by the tender love
 " Of the three heavenly powers that rule above,
 " Tell me the cause, that with harmonious note
 " Thy voice still warbles through thy wounded throat!"

" Deep wounds," the child replied, " my throat
 divide,

" And I, ere now, by nature's laws had died,

" But that the holy Jesus bade me live

" To his dear mother glory still to give :

" Her, the sweet source of Mercy's pitying tear,

" From earliest age I lov'd with warmth sincere ;

" And when my soul prepar'd to wing her flight

" To the dark regions of eternal night,

" To me she came, and bade me, ere I died,

" To sing once more the hymn, so late my pride.

" And when obedient I the hymn had sung,

" She laid, methought, a grain upon my tongue,

" And thus she spake—" Go on, dear child to sing,

" And with thy notes make Heav'n's high concave
 ring ;

" My name to honour pour thy ceaseless strain,

" Till from thy tongue be taken off this grain,

" Then hence to fetch thee I'll return again."

Instant

Instant the gentle abbot seiz'd his tongue,
And the small grain upon the pavement flung :
This done, his sweet harmonious numbers cease,
And he sinks tranquil to the realms of peace.
The tears fast gushing from the abbot's eyes,
Witness'd his sorrow mix'd with strange surprise ;
At length his sight was clos'd in night profound,
He swoon'd, and sunk all lifeless to the ground.
The weeping choir, when now began subside
The first soft flow of sorrow's tender tide,
Forth from the church the mournful bier convey'd,
And in a marble tomb the infant laid.

Rest, happy pious youth ! and thou, sweet Hugh,
Whose fame 'mong Lincoln's sons so blooming grew !
Both doom'd alike to an untimely fate,
Victims unmeet for Jews' remorseless hate !
Pour for our sinful souls th' availing prayer,
And beg Heav'n's Judge to shield us from despair !
For his sweet Mother's sake his grace implore,
And henceforth, true to him, we'll sin no more.

PRO-

PROLOGUE

TO

SIR THOPAS.

THE wondrous tale complete, in thought profound
 Each fix'd his eyes in silence on the ground;
 All but our Host, a gay and griefless man,
 Who thus on me his merry jest began:
 "Let thy sad face," he said, "one smile assume;
 "Stand back, and make my slender friend more room:
 "For with limbs small and fine thy stature's grac'd,
 "And thou like me art taper in the waist.
 "Methinks some brawny housewife thou might'st
 charm,
 "Like lap-dog carried warm beneath her arm.
 "Sure thou some fairy art, some elfish spright;
 "For to no man thou cordial dost unite.
 "Come tell some merry tale, and thus repay
 "Th' unsocial silence thou hast kept to day."
 "Willing, good Host, your mandate I receive,
 "Accept this rhyme, the best that I can give."

THE

THE

RHIME OF SIR THOPAS.

LISTEN, lordlings, to my song,
And a tale I will recite,
Of Sir Thopas, stout and strong,
Known to all a valiant knight.

Born in foreign lands was he,
At Popering *, cross the foaming main;
There his sire, a baron free,
Held a rich and wide domain.

Mild and graceful was his mien,
In his cheek glow'd the blooming rose,
And quick intelligence was seen
In his keen eye and high-arch'd nose.

* Poppering, or Poppeling, was the name of a parish in the marches of Calais: our famous antiquary, Leland, was once rector of it.—Tanner, Bibl. Brit. in v. Leland.

TYRWHITT, v. 13650.

His

His robe was costly chekelatoun*,
 His hose of Bruges brown,
 His beard and locks of bright saffron
 Flow'd to his waist adown.

Keen he pursued the falcon's flight,
 Or chas'd the forest deer,
 And wrestling was his first delight—
 In that he had no peer.

For him in love's sequester'd bower
 Full many a maiden pin'd;
 But, deaf to lawless passion's power,
 To none he e'er inclin'd.

And so it chanc'd upon a day
 Sir Thopas out would ride;
 Gallant he strode his courser grey,
 His long-sword by his side.

* Chekelatoun—The glossaries suppose this word to be compounded of *cheke* and *latoun*, a species of base metal like gold; but it seems rather to be merely a corruption of the Fr. *ciclaton*, which originally signified a *circular robe of state*, from Gr. Lat. *cyclas*, and afterwards *the cloth of gold* of which such robes were generally made. Du Cange in v. *cyclas* has produced instances enough of both senses.—TYRWHITT, v. 13664.

His devious way the Knight pursued
All in a forest green,
Where undisturb'd the sylvan brood
In numerous herds were seen.

There cloves and nutmegs thick he views,
To scent the well-wrought chest,
Or, when due skill their powers infuse,
The nut-brown bowl to zest.

Here gaily sings the jocund thrush,
There wails the plaintive dove,
While echo from each vocal bush
Responsive shakes the grove.

'Twas here the soft and tender pain
First seiz'd Sir Thopas' heart ;
For when he heard the dove complain,
He felt the well-known smart :

Then fierce his furious steed he press'd,
And scour'd the bending wood,
The white foam curl'd upon his chest,
His sides ran down with blood.

At

At length, with love and toil oppress'd,
He pull'd th' imperious rein,
And, in sweet hope of balmy rest,
He stretch'd him on the plain.

He slept—but when the cheering light
Of ruddy morn he spied,
“ I've dream'd,” he cries, “ the live-long night
“ An elf queen was my bride.

“ Women henceforth I swear to hate,
“ And all the sex resign ;
“ An elf queen is the only mate,
“ That's worthy to be mine.”

Instant he mounts, o'er stone and stile
In amorous quest to ride,
And after many a toilsome mile,
He Fairyland espied.

For while he roam'd each part around,
So fierce did he appear,
That there nor wife nor child was found,
Who dar'd approach for fear.

At

At length a giant, huge and dread,

Unto Sir Thopas came,

And thus in haughty tone he said,

(Sir * Oliphant was his name.)

"Who art thou, youth, who durst demand

"The Fairy Queen to see?

"Know, so divine and chaste a hand

"Disdains a wretch like thee.

"Hence! nor prophane this sacred place!

"Or dread my vengeance just.

"Hence! or, by Heav'n, this ponderous mace

"Shall grind thy bones to dust."

* Sir Elephant, a proper name for a giant.—Mandeville, p. 283. "And there ben also many wylde beltes, and nameliche of olyfauntes." The very learned and ingenious author of Letters on Chivalry, &c. supposes "that the boke of the Giant Olyphant and Chylde Thopas was not a fiction of Chaucer's own, but a story of antique fame, and very celebrated in the days of chivalry." I can only say, that I have not been so fortunate as to meet with any traces of such a story of an earlier date than the Canterbury Tales.

TYRWHITT, v. 13739.

VOL. III.

P

"Thy

"Thy threats," th' indignant Knight replies,

"Proud Paynim, I disdain.

"Arm'd, when to-morrow's sun shall rise,

"I'll meet thee on the plain.

"There thee my vengeful sword shall teach,

"Bath'd in thy rancorous gore,

"How weak thine arm, though rash thy speech,

"For then thou'lt speak no more!"

A stone he seiz'd, with fury fir'd,

From his huge sling to throw;

But quick the watchful Knight retir'd,

And 'scap'd the destin'd blow.

Yet, though unharm'd he left the field,

With rage his bosom burn'd,

And, swearing that he ne'er would yield,

Again he soon return'd.

His merry men all he told with joy,

That knighthood's honour'd laws

Call'd him a Paynim to destroy

In beauty's sacred cause.

Then,

Then, while he arms, around he calls
His minstrels to recite
Tales, that are told in trophied halls,
Of knights renown'd in fight.

His pages, ere his arms he takes,
With skill and studious care,
Sweet wine, and spice, and sugar'd cakes,
Full speedily prepare.

On his fair skin he first puts on
A shirt all white and pure;
His cassoc next, and habergeon,
His heart's blood to secure.

Next he his hauberk on him cast,
And then, as lily white,
His coat of mail he took the last,
And stood prepar'd for fight.

Red was his shield, on which a boar
With front terrific frown'd;
His giant-foe should soon, he swore,
Fall breathless on the ground.

His sword with polish'd ivory shone,
His helm was laton * bright,
And gleaming like the full-orb'd moon,
Shed lustre on the night.

Of the tough cypress was his spear,
And perilous, I ween,
Were it to stand its fierce career,
Or tempt its point so keen.

Now, lordlings all, and ladies free,
Attend with gracious ear ;
Love feats, and deeds of chivalry,
Delighted ye shall hear.

Let others wondrous tales rehearse,
Of Bevis and Sir Guy :
Sir Thopas swells my nobler verse,
(The flower of chivalry.)

His steed he strode, and forth he flew,
Like sparkle out of brand ;

* *Laton*, 'a kind of mixed metal, of the colour of brass.

His crest a tower wav'd fierce to view,
The while he scour'd the land.

Beneath the sky the night he pass'd,
His helm sustain'd his head,
And with kind nature's rich repast
Himself his palfrey fed.

He, like the good Sir * Percival,
Drank of the crystal stream,
Till on a day——

* The romance of Percival le Galois, or de Galis, was composed in octosyllable French verse by Chrestien de Troyes, one of the oldest and best French romancers before the year 1191. Fauchet, l. ii. c. x. It consisted of above sixty thousand verses (Bibl. des Rom. t. ii. p. 250); so that it would be some trouble to find the fact which is probably here alluded to. The romance under the same title in French prose, printed at Paris 1550, fol. can be only an abridgment, I suppose, of the original poem.—TYRWHITT, v. 13840.

PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS.

“CEASE, cease,” our Host replied, “my worthiest friend,

“And bring thy tedious rhiming to an end !

“Fatigued already is each fated ear,

“And more in truth we cannot, will not hear !”

“Since there’s not one,” I said, “of all this crowd,

“But who his tale to tell hath been allow’d,

“Wherefore, most honour’d Host, ’gainst me alone

“Is this hard law, this partial barrier thrown ?”

“The cause is this, that thou but wastest time,

“And in one word, thou shalt no longer rhyme :

“Welcome in prose some wholesome tale rehearse ;

“Thy talent, trust me, ’s much unapt for verse.”

“Gladly I take,” I said, “your proffer’d leave,

“If in plain prose my tale you will receive :

“Please you I hope it will, ’tis pure and sound,

“A decent fable on a moral ground ;

“Yet does it boast not to be wholly new ;

“Many before have taught the same, ’tis true,

“And each hath plac’d it in a different view.

“Thus

“ Thus when the four Evangelists record
“ The death and direful sufferings of our Lord,
“ Each in unvaried order does not state
“ The same successive actions they relate ;
“ Yet various though their manner, all unite
“ T’ attest the same great facts of which they write.
“ Me too, my friends, if ye by chance detect
“ To vary from the chain that ye expect,
“ Your kind indulgence grant me, I beseech,
“ Nor as unfounded blame too soon my speech :
“ With patient candour list to what I say,
“ And let me tell my tale throughout, I pray.”

THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

MELIBEUS was a young man, rich and powerful, and had, by his wife Prudence, one only daughter, who was called Sophia. One day, having left his wife and daughter within his house, and having barred fast the doors, he went out to divert himself in the fields, when four of his old foes came, and set ladders to the walls, entered in at the windows, and having beaten his wife, and wounded his daughter with five dangerous wounds in five sundry places, they left her for dead, and went their way.

Melibeus on his return, seeing the outrage that had been committed, abandoned himself to rage, and, tearing his hair, and his garments, like a madman, gave himself up a prey to the most poignant sorrow. His wife Prudence, as far as she might venture, gently entreated him to abate the violence of his grief: but, notwithstanding her entreaties, he did but persist the more in his cries and lamentations. Prudence, well remembering the words of Ovid in his *Remedy of Love*,

Quis

*Quis matrem, nisi mentis inops, in funere nati
Flere vetet ?*

“Who, but one deprived of reason, would forbid
“a mother, at the death of her son, to indulge
“the first bursts of her heartfelt afflictions?”

suffered her husband undisturbed to indulge his sorrow for a while : but when she discovered a fit occasion, Wherefore does my beloved, she said, expose himself thus, like a man devoid of understanding? Sorrow so immoderate becomes not a wise man. Your daughter, guarded by the all-protecting shield of Providence, may probably yet recover : but even were she now dead, you ought not, on that account, to abandon yourself to despair ; for a wise man, saith Seneca, shall not for the loss of children disquiet himself too much, but shall await with patience as well their death as his own. — To this Melibeus answered, But, with cause of sorrow such as mine, where is the man that would refrain from grief? Our Lord himself wept at the death of Lazarus his friend. I freely own, replied Prudence, that moderate sorrow is not forbidden ; and to weep with those that weep has, I know, the sanction of St. Paul. But though moderate sorrow is allowed, yet outrageous weeping

weeping is unlawful. When thy friend is dead, saith Seneca, let thine eyes be neither too moist, nor too dry; and although tears come into them, let them not fall. And when thou hast lost thy friend, do thy diligence to find another; in this is more wisdom than to continue weeping for him, who never may return. If then thou wilt govern thyself prudently and wisely, put away sorrow from thine heart. Remember the words of Solomon, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones." (Prov. xvii. 22.) And again, "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance; but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken." (Prov. xv. 13.)

Remember patient Job; when he had lost his children and his goods, and his whole body was full of sores, yet did he thus exclaim: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job i. 21.) To which Melibeus answered, Thy words indeed carry with them both conviction and instruction: but my heart, in truth, is so overborne with sorrow, that I know not what to do. Call to thee, saith Prudence, thy friends and relations; and when thou hast related to them thy distresses, attend to their counsel, and govern thyself
by

by it; for thus saith Solomon, "Hear counsel, and
"receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy
"latter end." (Prov. xix. 20.)

In obedience to his wife's advice, Melibeus called together a large congregation, as surgeons, physicians, old folk and young, and some of his old enemies, now apparently reconciled to his friendship; there came moreover some of his neighbours, who paid him respect, as is often the case more from fear than from love; there came also many a subtle flatterer, and some wise advocates learned in the law.

When these were all assembled, Melibeus, much affected by his injuries, declared to them his situation; and by the manner of his speech discovered the deep resentment that rankled in his heart. It appeared clearly to be his wish to reek speedy vengeance on his foes: yet did he condescend to ask counsel of his friends, though it was evident that he wished instantly to commence hostilities. Upon this a surgeon rose up, and thus addressed him:

As it is the duty of those, who profess the art of surgery, to render to every man the best assistance in their power, but never on the contrary to cause mischief to any one (for which reason it often happens, that when two men have wounded each other in fighting,

fighting, the same surgeon assisteth them both), to encourage warfare is contrary to the principles of our profession. But we will use with readiness all the skill we have, and night and day apply our utmost diligence towards the recovery of thy daughter, who, though grievously wounded, may yet, by God's grace, be restored in safety to thine arms.

To this opinion accorded also the physicians, adding only, that as the maladies of the human frame are best cured by their contraries, so ought the effects of war to be healed by the balm of peace. But his false friends and flatterers made pretence of great sorrow; and, desirous of aggravating the matter, by setting forth the power and abilities of Melibeus, and by despising and lessening that of his adversaries, fanned the fire of his resentment, and urged him to take arms.

Then an advocate rose up, and said, Sirs, the cause, for which we are assembled, is indeed of high and momentous concern, not solely on account of the great wickedness now committed, but as holding forth a wanton and flagitious example for the time to come; the great power also and rich estate of the parties makes it a matter of great concern, that we form a right and proper judgment of it. Wherefore,

fore, Melibeus, this is my counsel : That you take especial care to guard your own person, and that you take into your house sufficient force to guard it also : but suddenly to commence warfare for the gratification of your resentment, is by no means advisable, but rather take leisure to deliberate thereupon ; for the proverb saith, “ He that decideth hastily shall repent quickly.” It is well said also, “ He is a wise judge that understandeth a matter quickly, but judgeth leisurely :” for though in general delay is dangerous, yet in giving judgment, or executing vengeance, it is reasonable and becoming. Of this our Lord Jesus Christ gave an example, when the woman who was taken in adultery was brought before him. For though he knew well within himself what answer he would give, yet he would not give it hastily or without deliberation ; but he wrote on the ground twice, intimating thereby, that when we would act rightly, we should judge deliberately.

But the younger ones started up, and the greater part of the assembly despised the old wise man, and beginning to be clamorous, said, that as while the iron is hot, then is the time to strike ; so men should revenge their injuries while they are fresh and recent ; and with loud voice they all cried out, Revenge,

venge, revenge. On which one of the elders rose up, and with his hand made a signal for silence and attention; which being obtained, he thus expressed himself:

There is many a man, my friends, who crieth out war, war, yet considereth but little to what war amounteth.

War, at the beginning, hath so many specious baits, and high-sounding recommendations, that every unthinking mind is easily entrapped in it; but its events and consequences few men consider: for, when war is once begun, full many a child unborn shall either be starved by its ravages, or else live in sorrow, and die in misery: it is for this cause, that, ere it is begun, men should wisely counsel and deliberate.—But when he was proceeding farther to enforce his reasoning, they, almost all at once, began to interrupt his speech, and bade him draw it into smaller compass. For, indeed, how can any one speak agreeably to those, who are averse to his doctrines? For Jesus the son of Sirach saith, “A tale out of season is as music in mourning.” (Ecclus. xxii. 6.) In other words, it is of as little avail to speak to those, who dislike your doctrines, as it is to sing to him who is overwhelmed with sorrow.

When,

When, therefore, this old man saw that he claimed no attention, he fate him down again ; for Solomon saith, " Speak not in the ears of a fool, for he will "despise the wisdom of thy words." (Prov. xxiii. 9.) I see well, said this wise man, that the old proverb speaks truly, " Good counsel is most wanted, "when there is the greatest need of it."

Melibeus had in his counsel many, who gave him one advice in private, but a quite contrary in public. He, therefore, when he heard that the greater part declared for war, yielded quietly to their opinion, and decided according to their judgment. Dame Prudence, when she saw her husband adopt these dispositions, watching a proper opportunity, humbly spoke to him in this manner :

I beseech you, my dear lord, that you be not too precipitate, but give patient hearing to what I say. Piers Alphonse saith, whether a man do to you either good or evil, be not hasty to repay it ; for thus shall thy friend continue steady in his friendship, and thine enemy shall live the longer in fear of thee. The proverb saith, " He maketh sufficient haste, who "waiteth patiently." And, " Indiscreet haste produces no good."

To

To this Melibeus answered, Many reasons weigh with me, that I should not be governed by thy counsel; for, in the first place, by so doing, the world would count me but a fool, for having altered, by thy advice, those plans and decisions, which so many wise men have already settled and approved of. Secondly, women are all wicked alike; for saith Solomon, "One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all these have I not found." (Ecclesiastes vii. 28.) And moreover, should I be governed by thy counsel, it would seem, which God forbid, that I had yielded to thee the guidance over me; for the son of Sirach saith, "Give not thy son, and wife, thy brother and friend, power over thee, while thou livest; for better it is, that thy children should seek to thee, than that thou shouldest stand to their courtesy." (Ecclus. xxiii. 19, 21.)

It is besides sometimes needful, that counsel should be secret, which might by no means be, were I to be counselled by thee; for it is written, "The folly of women can conceal nothing, save that which they know not;" and afterwards the philosopher saith, "In wicked counsels women exceed men." And for these reasons I can pay no attention to thy advice.

When

When Dame Prudence had heard, with great patience and good humour, the whole that her husband had been pleased to say to her, she asked leave of him to speak again, and thus she replied to him: My lord, she said, as to your first reason, that may easily be answered; for I say, that it is no folly to alter your determination, after that the subject matter itself is changed; or when the thing appeareth to be now otherwise than it did before: and I say moreover, that though you have promised, and sworn to perform a certain thing, and nevertheless refrain from performing it for just cause, men may not therefore say, that you are false or forsworn; for the Book saith, "A man doth not act falsely, when he changeth his mind for the better." And though the matter in question hath been approved of, and resolved on, by a great multitude of persons; yet you ought not to perform it, if your better judgment tells you it is wrong; for sage counsel in great matters is more to be expected to be found among the few, than among a multitude, where every one is partial to his own opinion, and among whom nothing is found in general, but vehemence and confusion.

As for your second reason, that all women are wicked, you by this censure shew your contempt of

the whole sex ; and “ he, that all despiseth,” saith the Book, “ all displeaseth.” And Seneca saith, “ He that “ would gain knowledge, should despise no one ; and “ that, which he knoweth not, he should not be “ ashamed to learn, even from those who are inferior to himself.”

But that there hath lived many a good woman, may very easily be proved ; and surely our blessed Lord would not have condescended to have been born of a woman, had all women been wicked : and as a farther proof of their excellence, our Lord, after that he had risen from the dead, made his appearance rather to a woman than to his apostles. And though Solomon hath said, “ That he never found a good “ woman,” it followeth not therefore that all women are wicked ; for though he might not, yet many another man hath found a woman both good and true. But, perhaps, it was the intention of Solomon, to declare that he found no woman possessed of absolute perfection, which is to say, in other words, that there is none good, save God alone, as he himself hath declared in his Gospel. For, without doubt, there is no creature so good, but must fall greatly short of the divine perfection.

Your

Your third reason is this—You say, that, if you govern yourself by my counsel, it should seem, as if you had resigned to me the guidance and direction of your person. But in that also, I humbly presume, you are mistaken; for, if that were the case, that no one should be counselled, but by those, who have the absolute rule and dominion over them, men would not take counsel so often as we see they do; whereas in fact, whoever asketh advice of another, is perfectly free to choose whether he will follow such advice or not.

Your fourth reason declareth, that the idle tongues of women can keep nothing secret, but that, which hath been never known to them. Now, these words are to be understood of those women only, who are confest prates, and of an ill mind. With regard to such has obtained this saying, that “there be two things, which are enough to banish any man from his house, a smoky chimney, and a prating wife;” and of such women Solomon saith, “It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman.” (Prov. xxi. 19.) And, sir, by your leave, that am not I, for you have many a time had proof, as well of my great silence, as of my patience,

and that whatever requireth to be kept secret, that I can keep most strictly.

As to your fifth reason, in which you say, that in evil counsels women exceed men, in this instance most surely that reason can have no weight: for in the matter that is before us, you require the counsel and the sanction of your friends, to do that which is unlawful. If then your wife wishes by her advice to restrain your wicked purpose, she is certainly deserving rather of commendation, than of censure. It is in this sense you should understand the words of the philosopher you allude to. In wicked counsels, that is, when men counsel wickedly, their wives over-rule them. And, in truth, many and various examples I can bring to you, where the counsels of women have proved salutary and wholesome. Some men will say, indeed, that the counsels of women are either too dear, or of too little value: but although I allow, that many a woman be worthless, and her advice vile and dangerous; yet, on the other hand, hath many a man found great profit and advantage, from the discreet counsel he hath received from the woman he hath advised with. By the wise counsel of his mother, Rebecca, Jacob obtained the blessing of his father,

father, and the dominion over his brethren. Judith, by her sage counfel, delivered the city Bethulia from the hands of Holofernes, who would soon otherwise have destroyed it. Abigail delivered Nabal her husband from the rage of king David, and afterwards, by her wit and prudence, appeased the anger of the king. Hester, by her wise conduct, assisted greatly the people of God in the time of king Ahasuerus; and in many a woman more hath history recorded the same virtue and discretion.

Moreover, when our Lord had created Adam, he said, "It is not good for man to be alone; I will "make him an help meet for him." (Gen. ii. 18.) Now, if women were not good, nor their counfel profitable, God would not have made them, and called them the help of man, but rather his confusion. A wise clerk once said, "What is better than gold? "Jaspre. What is better than jaspre? Wisdom. "And what is better than wisdom? Woman. And "what is better than a good woman? Nothing." These, sir, and many other reasons, that I might advance to you, prove that women are good, and their counfel profitable; and if you will trust to mine, I will engage to restore to you your daughter in safety,

and that the business shall finally redound to your honour.

When Melibeus had heard these words of his wife Prudence, I see, said he, that the words of Solomon are true, which say, "Pleasant words are as an honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." (Prov. xvi. 24) And, wife, because of thy sweet words, and that I have proved and tried thy great wisdom and truth, I will guide myself in all things by thy counsel.

Now, sir, saith Dame Prudence, since that you vouchsafe to be governed by my counsel, I will inform you how you should guide yourself in your choice of wise counsellors. You should, first of all, in whatsoever work you undertake, beseech Almighty God, that he would be your counsellor, and to frame your mind to such a disposition, that you may both counsel and comfort, as Tobit taught his son. "Bless the Lord thy God alway, and desire of him, that thy ways may be directed, and that all thy paths and counsels may prosper." (Tob. iv. 19.) St. James also saith, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth all men liberally, and upbraideth not." (James i. 5.)
And

And afterwards, "Ye fight and war, yet ye have
"not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not,
"because ye ask amiss. For ye ought to say, If the
"Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."
(James iv. 2, 3. 15.)

First, he that asketh advice, must certainly be
free from anger; for he that hath great wrath never
considereth at all, whether the thing he would do be
lawful or unlawful. And secondly, he that is in
great wrath, cannot form a right judgment; and he
that cannot form a right judgment, cannot take
good counsel. And thirdly, as saith Seneca, "He
"that is given to wrath, speaketh offensive words,
"and exciteth others to anger and resentment."

Besides this, fir, you must banish covetousness
from your heart; for the Apostle saith, "The love of
"money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim. vi. 10.)
And, believe me, a covetous man hath none other
thought, but to fulfil his desires; and yet this may
never be accomplished; for the more he aboundeth in
riches, the more he desireth. And with equal care
you must banish hastiness from your heart; for how
can any man determine for the best, when he acts
upon a sudden thought? He must the rather ponder
upon it often; for, as you heard before the words of

the old proverb, "He that judgeth hastily, repenteth quickly."

You know, you do not yourself always continue in the same opinion, and that which appears to you advisable to do at one time, appeareth contrary at another. When, therefore, you have well considered, and have determined on, what seemeth the best in your own eyes, it is my advice, that you keep your counsel to yourself. Discover to no one your resolves, unless the circumstances of your situation require you so to do; for the son of Sirach saith, "Whether it be to a friend or foe, talk not of other men's lives; and if thou canst without offence, reveal them not; for he heard, and observed thee, and when time cometh, he will hate thee." (Ecclus. xix. 8, 9.) Another saith, "Scarcely mayest thou find any one, who will keep thy counsel secretly." The Book saith, "While thou keepest thy counsel in thine heart, thou keepest it in thy prison; and when thou betrayest it to any one, he holdeth thee in a snare: and therefore it is better for thee to hide thy counsel in thine own breast, than to pray him, to whom thou dost communicated it, to keep it secret." For Seneca saith, "If thou

"thou canst not keep thine own counsel, how canst
"thou expect that another will?"

And if thou hast reason to think, that thy communicating thy secrets to another may be of benefit and advantage to thee, thou shalt communicate them in this manner. First, thou shalt conceal entirely what thine own preference be; for be assured, that such counsellors are most times flatterers, I mean the counsellors of great men, who rather study to speak agreeably, and according to the wishes of their great friend, than to give such counsel, as is honest and profitable; and therefore it is said, "that rarely
"doth a great man obtain good counsel, if he do
"not find it within himself." After that, thou shouldest consider thy friends and thine enemies. And among thy friends thou shouldest consider those that are most faithful, and most wise, those that are advanced, as well in reputation, as in years; and of them thou shouldest ask counsel, as the case requireth.

I say, thou shouldest first call to thy counsel thy friends that are true; for Solomon saith, "Ointment
"and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth the sweetness
"of a man's friend by hearty counsel." (Prov. xxvii.
9.) He saith also, "Loving favour is rather to be
"chosen,

“chosen, than silver and gold.” (Prov. xxii. 1.) And again, “A faithful friend is a strong defence, “and he that hath found such an one hath found a “treasure.” (Ecclus. vi. 14.) Next, you ought to consider whether your true friends be wise and discreet; for the Book saith, “Always ask counsel “of those that are wise:” for which reason you should consult in preference those that are advanced in years, such as have been experienced in the transactions of the world, and whose counsels have been of old approved; for the Book saith, “In old men “is found wisdom, and of long time cometh prudence.” And Tully saith, “Great things are not “accomplished by strength, or activity of body, but “by counsel, by weight of character, and by knowledge, which three things do not decay by eye, but “increase from day to day.”

But, moreover, keep this for a general rule of conduct, to call always to your counsel some known and especial friends; for Jesus Sirach saith, “Be in peace “with many; nevertheless have but one counsellor “of a thousand.” For although at first thou communicate thy counsels to but a few, thou mayest afterwards communicate them to more, if there be need; but take care always, that thy counsellors have
the

the three before-mentioned qualifications, that they be true, that they be wise, and of long experience: nor govern thyself alway by one counsellor alone; for it is sometimes needful to be counselled by many; and Solomon saith, "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." (Prov. xi. 14.)

Having now told you, who are the people you ought chiefly to consult, I will now teach you what counsels it is your duty to avoid. First, you should avoid the counselling of fools; for the son of Sirach saith, "Consult not with a fool; he cannot keep counsel." (Ecclus. viii. 17.) The Book saith also, "The property of a fool is this, to believe without reason all evil of others, and without reason all good of himself."

You should take care also to avoid the counselling of flatterers, who strive to please you rather by the praising of your person, than by telling you the truth. Wherefore Tully saith, "Among the pestilences of friendship, the greatest is flattery:" and there is more need for thee that thou dread and avoid flatterers, than any other people in the world. The Book saith, "Thou shalt rather dread and fly from the words of flattering praises, than from the eager expressions of a friend, who telleth thee
" the

“the truth.” And Solomon saith, “A man that
“flattereth his neighbour setteth a net.” (Prov.
xix. 5.) And therefore Tully saith, “Incline not
“thine ears to flatterers, and take no counsel of their
“words.” And Cato saith, “Advise thee well, and
“flee from words of sweetness.”

Thou shouldest also avoid the counselling of thine
old enemies, that are since reconciled. The Book
saith, “No man returneth safely into the favour of
“his old enemy.” And Æsop saith, “Trust not to
“them, with whom thou hast had sometime war
“and enmity, nor tell them thy counsel.” And Se-
neca telleth the cause why. “It cannot but be,”
saith he, “where great fire hath long remained,
“but that there should still continue some degree of
“warmth.” And, therefore, saith the son of Sirach,
“Never trust thine enemy.” (Ecclus. xii. 10.)
And, truly, though thine enemy be reconciled, and
make shew of submission to thee, never trust him, for
he maketh shew of submission more to serve his own
purpose, than to do thee honour; and because he
thinketh to gain the advantage over thee, rather by
feigned friendship, than by victory in battle.

And Peter Alphonso saith, “Make no fellowship
“with thine old enemies; for if thou do them service,
“they

"they will pervert it to a bad purpose." Thou shouldest avoid also all counselling with thy dependants, and those who bear thee great respect; for perhaps they feign it more from fear than from love. And therefore thus saith a philosopher, "No man is sincerely true to him of whom he is afraid." And Tully saith, "The empire of no potentate can long continue, who is not beloved by his people, more than feared."

Thou shouldest avoid also all counselling with those who are given to drunkenness, because such can keep nothing secret.

Thou shouldest also always have suspicion of the counsels of those, who give thee one advice in private, and a quite different in public; for thus saith Cassiodorus: "It is a feint, rather to be practised on an enemy, to appear publickly to do one thing, but to do in secret quite the reverse."

Thou shouldest also have suspicion of the counsels of the wicked, for it is ever full of deceit; and David saith, "Blessed is that man, that hath not walked in the counsels of the ungodly." (Psal. i. ver. 1.)

I will next tell thee in what manner thou shouldest examine thy counsels, according to the advice of Tully.

In

In the first place, take heed thyself, that in the matter on which thou askest counsel, thou tell the plain truth ; for no one can expect good advice, if he state not his case fairly. Thou shouldest next consider, whether the object which thou art desirous of obtaining be consistent with reason, and within the compass of thy abilities ; and whether the more respectable of thy counsellors sanction and approve it.

Thou shouldest next consider the consequences of this thine intended undertaking, and, without being biassed by other views, shouldest determine on that only, which promises the best issue. Thou shouldest next examine the motives and causes from whence thy desires spring ; and when thou hast considered them in all points of view, and hast submitted them to the advice of the wise and the experienced, thou shouldest again consider, whether thou hast abilities to carry them into execution. For surely no man should attempt a thing, unless he can perform it as he ought ; for the proverb saith, “ He that attempteth too much, performeth little.” And this is the advice of Cato, “ Attempt only such things as are “ within thy power, lest the weight of thy undertaking be too great for thee, and thou be forced,
“ when

"when thou hast begun it, to relinquish it unfinished."

And if thou hast any doubt, whether thou art able to do it or not, rather decline it, than undertake it. And Peter Alphonse saith, "If thou art able to perform it, but hast reason to believe thou shalt repent it afterwards, it is better that thou desist from it." But when thou hast well considered both the reasonableness of the thing as well as thy power to perform it, persist till thou hast completed it. But it is now time that I explain to thee at what time, and upon what occasion, thou mayest change thy determination without reproach. This thou mayest do, whenever there is a change in the causes, that actuated thy former counsels, or when new causes arise; for the Law saith, "New circumstances demand new counsels:" and Seneca saith, "When thy counsels have reached the ears of thine enemies, it is good to change them." Thou mayest also change thy determination, when thou findest that, through error, or any other cause, mischief may arise from it, or whenever it is itself bad, or springeth from a bad motive; for the Law saith, "That all unlawful promises are void in themselves, and are as nugatory as if they were impossible."

And

And take this for a general rule, that counsel which is asserted to be so firmly fixed, that it may on no conditions be changed, that counsel I say is wicked.

Melibeus, when he had heard the doctrines of his wife Prudence, thus answered her: You have hitherto taught me only in general terms, how I should conduct myself in regard to the attention I should pay to my counsellors: but I now desire that you would more particularly inform me what your opinion is of the counsellors I have already chosen.

I beseech you, my dear lord, saith she, in all humility, that you will not take offence, if I say what perchance may be disagreeable to your feelings; for, God knows, my sole design is to give you such advice as may be both honourable and beneficial to you; and I hope, therefore, that your goodness will take what I say patiently. And in truth, as to your present counsels (if indeed they may be called counsels, and not, as they really are, rather the movements of folly), in these you have, in many respects, been guilty of great error.

First, you have been guilty of error in thus assembling your counsellors; for you should have first called together a few only, and you might afterwards have
consulted

consulted more, had it been necessary. But you have now called together a great multitude of a sudden, whose counsels are as great an impediment to your views, as they are troublesome and disagreeable.

Again, you have been guilty of error, for, instead of having called to you your experienced and trusty friends, you have assembled the young and the unknown, false flatterers, and reconciled enemies, and those who do not love you, but only pay you outward respect.

Again, you have been guilty of error, in that you have brought to your counsel, anger, covetousness, and hastiness, three things totally incompatible with every wise counsel; and these passions you have neither extinguished in yourself, nor in your counsellors, as you ought.

You have erred also, in that you have previously discovered to your counsellors, that you have revenge in your heart, and that your wish is to make war; and they having from your words discovered in you this inclination, have given you the advice that they think is agreeable, but not such as is beneficial.

You have erred also, in that you seem to be satisfied with these counsellors only, and with the little deliberation with which their counsels have been

weighed; whereas, in so high and momentous an affair, you should have had recourse to more advisers, and have used greater deliberation.

You have erred also, in not having examined and scrutinized your counsellors, in the manner, and as the case demands.

You have erred also in this, that you have made no distinction between your true friends, and feigned ones. You have not sought to know the opinion of the old, and of those of experienced wisdom; but have been guided merely by the majority of voices. And as you well know, that fools exceed wise men in number, whoever in great assemblies pays regard rather to numbers, than to the weight and wisdom of characters, resigns thereby the mastery in such assemblies to fools.

I grant, returned Melibeus, that I have been in great error: but as thou hast heretofore declared, that he is not to blame, who, in certain cases, changes his resolution, I am now ready to alter mine, in the manner thou shalt recommend. For the proverb saith, "To sin is human, but to persist in it" is diabolical."

To this replied dame Prudence, Let us examine well your counsellors, and let us see which of them
hath

hath spoken most reasonably, and hath given you the best advice : and to begin first with those, who spoke first in order ; I tell you, that the surgeon and physician have spoken to you the most wisely ; for they have told you, it is their duty to do good to men, but not mischief. And having answered to you thus wisely and discreetly, it is my judgment, that they be handsomely and honourably rewarded ; which will cause them to be more diligent in their attention to your daughter ; for though they be your fast friends, it is not right that, on that account, they should serve you without reward. And with respect to that doctrine propounded by the physicians, that the maladies of the human frame are healed by their contraries, I beg you will explain to me, what you understand from it.

I understand, saith Melibeus, that when one man hath done to me an injury, that is, a thing contrary to right, I may do the same to him, and then I cure one contrary by another.

Alas ! alas ! saith Prudence, how easily every man inclines to his own will !—Most surely the physician's words are not to be understood in that sense ; for undoubtedly wickedness is not contrary to wickedness, nor vengeance to vengeance, nor wrong

to wrong; but each of them increaseth and aggravateth the other. But this is the sense in which these words should be understood: That goodness and wickedness are two contraries; and peace and war, vengeance and patience, and many other things. Wickedness, therefore, shall be healed by goodness, war by peace, and vengeance by patience: and to this the Apostle Paul in many places agreeth, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man." (Thes. i. 5. 15.) "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing." (Peter i. 3. 9.)

But I will now speak of the counsel that was given to thee by the men of the law, and by the wise and the experienced: they, above all things, recommended that thou shouldest guard thy person, and defend thine house; and said moreover, that, in a case like thine, thou oughtest to act with great caution and deliberation. As to the first point, that of the guard of thy person, thou shouldest well understand that whoever goeth to war, ought, before all things, meekly and devoutly to implore our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant him his protection, and be his sovereign help in time of need; for on earth surely no man is safe, unless he be under his shelter

shelter and protection. To this opinion accordeth the prophet David, who saith, "If God keepeth not the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Now, therefore, thou shouldest commit the guard of thy person to thy known and tried friends; for Cato saith, "If thou have need of help, ask it of those you well know; for there is no better physician than a faithful friend." But after this, you should keep away from both strangers and liars, and be on your guard ever in their company; for Pier Alphonse saith, "Make no friend of any one, whom you have not known for a long time; and if by chance you fall into company with a stranger, make all the enquiry in your power of his life and conversation; and rather dissemble your designs than let him into the knowledge of them; and if he bear a spear, hold you on the right side; but if he wear a sword, keep you on his left." Thou shouldest, therefore, keep thyself discreetly out of the way of such persons, and avoid their counsels above all things. Thou shouldest take heed also, that, presuming too much on thine own strength, thou do not too lightly esteem thine adversary; for every wise man dreadeth his enemy. And Solomon saith, "Happy is the man, that feareth alway; but he that

“hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief.” (Prov. xxviii. 14.) Thou shouldest also guard against treachery; for Seneca saith, “He that suspecteth evil, avoideth evil; and no man falleth into perils, that guardeth against them.” And although thou think that thou art in a place of safety, nevertheless be on thy guard, nor be less negligent in exposing thyself to a small enemy than to a great one. “A man,” saith Seneca, “that is well advised, is cautious, even of his least enemy.” Ovid saith, “That the little weasel will slay the great bull and the wild hart.” And the Book saith, “A little thorn may prick a king full fore; and a little hound will hold the wild boar.” But I do not therefore advise thee to be a coward without cause.

Now, as to the second point, in which thy counsellors advised thee to keep diligent ward over thine house, I would fain know, in what sense that advice is understood by thee.

Melibeus answered, and said, I understand by this advice, that, by means of towers, and castles, and of all sorts of defensive arms, I might prevent mine enemy from approaching my house. To which Prudence replied, The defence of towers and castles

ties is attended with great expence, and far greater trouble; and, when completed, they are of no use, unless they be defended by brave and steady friends: but the safest defence and garrison a rich man can have, is to be well beloved by his neighbours and dependants; for Tully saith, "There is a strong hold, which no man may overthrow—a prince beloved of his citizens and his people."

Now, as to the third point, in which thy counsellors advised that thou proceed not hastily in this matter, but that thou use in it great caution and deliberation—In this, I think, they counselled thee wisely and discreetly; for Tully saith, "In every undertaking, ere thou begin it, prepare thyself with great diligence:" and I tell thee, that in providing for war, and in furnishing of garrisons, thou oughtest to prepare thyself with great deliberation; for Tully saith, "That long preparation before battle maketh a short victory." And Cassiodorus saith, "The garrison, by how much the more deliberately it hath been planned, by so much is it the stronger."

But let us now attend to the counsel, that has been given to thee by thy neighbours; by those, who, without regard, pay thee outward respect, by

thine old enemies reconciled, and by thy flatterers, who have given thee one counsel in private, but a quite contrary in public; and by the young, whose advice it was, to commence war without delay. Thou hast certainly erred greatly, in having called such people to thy counsel, the weakness of whose opinions has been proved by the reasons before given. But let us now examine them particularly, and we will first proceed according to the rules of Tully.

As to the matter of fact, of that we need take no great time to enquire, because the injury itself, the number of the offenders, and the manner of the offence, are all sufficiently notorious. We will next examine, according to Tully, the *consenting*, that is, who they are, and what they are, and how many, that consent to thine own desires of taking speedy vengeance; and let us consider also, who they are, and what they are, and how many, that consent to thine adversary. As to the question, it is well known what those are who consented to thine own desires; for those who could counsel thee to take speedy vengeance, were not thy true friends.

Let us next consider, who those are, whom thou esteamest thy particular friends; for though thou art thyself opulent, thou art almost but an individual;
for

for thou hast no child, but one daughter, no brothers, no cousins; no near kindred at all, the dread of whose resentment might restrain thine enemies from destroying thee. Thou knowest moreover, that at thy death thy riches will be divided; and when each hath obtained his portion, he will think very little of revenging thy wrongs. But thine adversaries are three in number, and they have many brethren, and cousins, and children, and other kindred; and wert thou even to slay two of them, yet enough would remain alive to revenge their death, and to ensure thine in return. And though thy kindred may, perhaps, be more firmly attached to thee, than the kindred of thine adversaries, yet, nevertheless, the relationship is but distant; whereas, theirs is quite near, and gives them, therefore, a great advantage over thee.

Let us next attend to those, who advised thee to take speedy vengeance, and consider whether such advice be consistent with reason. Thou knowest it is not so; for no man by right ought to execute vengeance on another, except he be the judge, whose province it is so to do; he alone hath authority to render justice speedily, or otherwise, as the laws require.

Again,

Again, with respect to that which Tully entitleth consenting, thou shouldest consider, whether thou hast ability to complete that vengeance, which thine own wishes desire, and thy counsellors advise: and to this question thou shouldest answer nay; for truly (to speak properly) no men hath ability to do any one act, unless he may do it rightfully; and surely rightfully no man may take vengeance on his own authority. Thus thou seest, therefore, that thy ability doth not consent or accord to thy wishes.

Let us next examine the third point, which Tully entitleth the *consequent*.

Now the consequent is, the vengeance which thou proposest to take, from which ensueth another vengeance, other wars, and other evils, of which thou art not now aware.

And, as to the fourth point, which Tully entitleth *engendering*—thou shouldest consider, that this wrong, which hath been done to thee, hath been engendered of the hate of thine enemies; but that the taking vengeance of this wrong would but engender other vengeance, and would cause great waste of treasure, and other numberless misfortunes.

And now, for the last point, which Tully entitleth *causes*. Thou shalt understand, that the wrong,
which

which thou hast received, is termed *oriens* or *efficiens*, and *causa longinqua et propinqua*; that is to say, the remote cause, and the immediate. The remote cause is Almighty God, who is the cause of all things; the cause immediate is thy three enemies; the cause accidental was hatred; the cause material was the five wounds; the cause formal was the manner, to wit, by bringing ladders, and climbing in at a window; the cause final was to put thy daughter to death. But, to speak of the cause remote, as to what end they shall hereafter come, or what shall finally betide them, of that I can only form a guess and conjecture. It is natural to suppose, they should come to a bad end; for the Book of decrees saith, "Seldom and with difficulty are bad causes brought to a good issue."

And now, sir, shouldest thou require of me, why God hath permitted men to do thee this injury, to that, in truth, I can give thee no answer; for the Apostle saith, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." (Rom. xi. 33.) Nevertheless, this I presume, and believe, that God, who is full of justice, and of righteousness, hath suffered this injury to be done to thee for some good cause.

Thy

Thy name is Melibee, that is to say, a man that drinketh honey. Thou hast drunk so much of the honey of things temporal, of the riches, the pleasures, and honours of this world, that thou art drunken, and hast forgotten Jesus Christ thy creator; thou hast not paid to him due honour and reverence, nor hast thou regarded the words of Ovid, which say, "Under the honey of the goods of thy body is concealed the venom that slayeth the soul." And Solomon saith, "It is not good to eat much honey." (Prov. xxv. 27.) And peradventure Christ hath in despite turned away his face from thee, and hast suffered thee to be punished in the same degree that thou hast transgressed.

Thou hast sinned against our Lord Christ; for surely the three enemies of mankind, the flesh, the world, and the devil, have been by thee wilfully permitted to enter into thine heart, through the windows of thy body; and their assaults and temptations have not been sufficiently guarded against and resisted; so that they have wounded thy soul in five places; that is to say, by the means of thy five senses sin hath entered into thy heart. In like manner hath our Lord Christ permitted thy three enemies, by the windows

of

of thine house, to enter into it, and to wound thy daughter with the five wounds before mentioned.

I see well, said Melibeus, that thou endeavourest strongly, by thine arguments, to restrain my desire of revenging myself on my enemies, by pointing out to me the ill consequences that may arise from it: but if every man were to consider the perils, and evil consequences, that might ensue from taking vengeance, it might never be taken at all, which would be productive of great mischief; for, by the taking of vengeance, the wicked are marked out, and distinguished from the good; and many, whose will impels them to do evil, are restrained from their wicked purposes through fear of being punished and chastized for their bad deeds.

To this answered Dame Prudence, I grant, saith she, that taking vengeance is productive of good, as well as of evil; but taking vengeance belongeth not to every one, but to judges only, and such others, as have jurisdiction over offenders. And I further maintain, that, as an individual sinneth in taking vengeance on another man, so doth a judge sin, if he take not vengeance on him, who hath offended; for Seneca saith, "He is a good master, who bringeth the wicked to trial." And Cassiodore saith, "A
" man

“man dreadeth to commit outrages, when he know-
“eth he shall displease thereby both the judges and
“the king.” And another saith, “The judge that
“dreadeth to do right, causeth men to commit out-
“rages.” And St. Paul the Apostle saith, in his
Epistle to the Romans, “He beareth not the sword
“in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger,
“to execute wrath upon him, that doeth evil.”
(Rom. xiii. 4.)

If then thou art desirous, that those who have injured thee be punished, thou shouldest appeal to the judge who hath the jurisdiction over them; and he shall punish them, as the law requireth.

I am now, said Melibeus, quite changed in my sentiments about taking vengeance. I bethink me well, and recollect, that Fortune hath protected me from my childhood, and hath helped me safely through many a great strait. I will now trust myself again to her, not doubting, by God's grace, but she will assist me to revenge my wrongs.

Indeed, said Prudence, if thou wilt take my counsel, thou shouldest not pay respect to Fortune at all; for Seneca saith, “Things that are done unwisely,
“and depending upon Fortune, shall come to no
“good end.” And the same writer saith, “The
“more

"more clear and the more shining Fortune is, the
"more brittle is she, and the sooner broken."
Trust not in her, for she is not stedfast nor stable;
for when thou thinkest thyself the most certain of
her assistance, she will fail and deceive thee. And
whereas thou sayest, that Fortune hath protected thee
from thy childhood, I think thou shouldest, for that
reason, put the less trust in her; for Seneca saith,
"The man, who is much favoured by Fortune, is
"made a fool by her."

Now then, since thou art desirous to have vengeance, and yet approvest not of that, which the laws award, and the judge pronounceth; and since that, which is left to the guidance of Fortune, is perilous and uncertain; then hast thou none other remedy, than to have recourse to that Sovereign Lord and Judge, who avengeth all wrongs, and who hath himself declared, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." (Rom. xii. 19.)

To this Melibeus answered, If I do not revenge the injuries men do to me, I do but invite, not only them, but all others, to do me still more; for it is written, "if thou take no vengeance of an old wrong, thou dost but invite thine enemy to commit a fresh one." And by such patience men would repeat their outrages,

outrages, till I should not be able to sustain them, and they would hold me moreover in utter contempt; for some men say, "by much patience injuries shall fall so thick upon thee, that thou shalt not be able to endure them."

It is true, saith Prudence, that too great a degree of patience is productive of ill; but it does not therefore follow, that every person who is injured is to take vengeance himself, for that belongeth to the judges only, whose duty it is to punish wrongs; and, therefore, the two authorities thou hast before quoted, are to be understood only of judges, who, if they suffer by too great lenity crimes to go unpunished, they not only invite, but command men to commit them. So a wise man hath said, "The judge that correcteth not the sinner, commandeth, and biddeth him to sin." And judges and sovereigns might so long suffer offenders to escape punishment, that, in length of time, they might become so daring and powerful, as to turn them out of their places, and destroy their whole authority.

But we will suppose, that it were lawful for thee to revenge thine own wrongs; I say thou hast it not in thy power to effect it; for, if thou wilt compare thy strength with that of thine adversaries, thou shalt

find

find that thou art in many respects in weaker condition than they ; and that is another reason, why, at present, thou shouldest be patient.

Thou knowest, moreover, that it is a common saying, " It is madness to strive with a man, who is " stronger than thyself : " and to strive with one of equal strength, is an affair of great peril ; and with one whose strength is inferior, is folly ; and, therefore, should a man, as much as he is able, avoid contending at all ; for Solomon saith, " It is an honour to a " man to cease from strife. " (Prov. xx. 3.) And, if it chance, that a stronger man than thou do thee some injury, be anxious rather to remedy, than to avenge it ; for Seneca saith, " He putteth himself in " great peril, that striveth with one who is mightier " than himself. " And Cato saith,

*Cede locum læsus, fortunæ cede potentis,
Lædere qui potuit, prodesse aliquando valebit.*

L. iv. Dif. 40.

" Give way when thou art injured, and yield to
" him, who hath now been able to hurt thee ;
" for at another time, perhaps, he may be as
" willing to do thee service. "

Yet, suppose further, that ye, both of you, had the power, as well as the liberty, to take revenge, still

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there

there are many reasons, that should restrain you from doing so, and should incline you rather to put up with the injuries that have been done to you. First, thou shouldest have consideration of thine own sins and offences, for which God hath suffered these wrongs to fall upon thee ; for the poet saith, “ We ought patiently to endure the grievances we “ suffer, when we consider that we have deserved “ them.” And St. Gregory saith, “ When a man “ considereth well the number of his sins, the afflictions, which befall him, seem the less heavy ; and “ inasmuch as he thinketh his sins the more grievous, “ insomuch do his sufferings appear the easier and “ the lighter.” Thou oughtest, moreover, to bend thine heart to take upon it the patience of our Lord Jesus Christ ; as St. Peter saith, “ Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should “ follow his steps, who did no sin, neither was “ guile found in his mouth ; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he “ threatened not ; but committed himself to him that “ judgeth righteously.” (1 Peter ii. 21, 22, 23.)

And the great examples of patience, which the saints, now in heaven, exhibited amid their sufferings, which were great and undeserved, ought to stir up in thee

thee the like mind. Thou shouldest encourage thyself in patience also, by this consideration, that the tribulations of this world endure but for a while; but the joy obtained, by being patient in tribulation, is permanent and lasting.

And of this be thou well assured, that he hath been ill disciplined, and ill instructed, who is averse to become patient; for Solomon saith, "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." (Prov. xix. 11.) And again, "Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud." (Prov. xvi. 19.) He saith also, "A wrathful man stirreth up strife, but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife." (Prov. xv. 18.) And again, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." (Prov. xvi. 32.) And St. James saith, "Be patient, therefore, brethren—And behold, we count them happy, which endure." (James v. 7. 11.)

I grant you, said Melibeus, that patience is a virtue of high perfection: but every man may not attain to the perfection ye require. That I have not attained it, I truly confess; for my heart cannot rest

till I have avenged my wrongs. And, if mine enemies, when they committed these outrages against me, were regardless of danger, and thereby executed their atrocious designs, men ought not to blame me, if I face the same danger to revenge one attack by another.

Ah ! said Dame Prudence, thou speakest now as thy will prompts thee ; but in no case whatever may a man commit an outrage to gratify his revenge ; for Cassiodorus saith, “ His offence is as great who committeth violence to revenge himself, as he who “ was guilty of the first outrage.” And therefore your revenge should be obtained by the law, and not by violence.

And if ye revenge the wrongs done you by your enemies in any other manner than the laws allow, ye are guilty of sin. And therefore saith Seneca, “ A man may not revenge one wickedness by another.”

If ye say that it be lawful to resist force by force, ye say true, provided the resistance be immediate ; for then it is not revenge, but self-defence : but in that self-defence it behoveth a man to keep himself within bounds, and not to proceed to unnecessary extremities. In the case we are now considering, thou knowest

knowest that thou makest no plea of self-defence, but merely of revenge ; and therefore thou provest that thou hast no desire to act with temper. It is for that reason, I am so desirous to recommend unto thee patience ; for Solomon saith, " He that is soon angry, dealeth foolishly." (Prov. xiv. 17.)

I grant, said Melibeus, that when a man feeleth himself touched with that, which doth not belong to him, it is no wonder that he suffer ; for the Law saith, " He is culpable, who meddleth with that, which doth not concern him." And Solomon saith, " He, that meddleth with strife, that belongeth not to him, is like one, that taketh a dog by the ears." (Prov. xxvi. 17.) For, as he, that taketh the dog by the ears, is bitten by him, so doth he, that meddleth with the strife of another, fall into mischief.

But thou knowest well, that this grievance, about which we are now debating, toucheth me too nearly ; and, therefore, there can be no wonder, if I be impatient, and in wrath ; nor do I see cause to dread the consequences, were I to satisfy my revenge ; since I am both richer and more powerful than mine enemies ; and thou well knowest, that by money and great possessions the things of this world are chiefly

governed. And Solomon saith, "Wealth maketh
"many friends." (Prov. xix. 4.)

When Prudence heard her husband boast so much
of his riches, and so much undervalue the power of
his adversaries, she thus replied to him: I grant, said
she, my dear husband, that thou art rich and mighty;
and that riches are a great blessing to those, who
have acquired them honestly, and used them fitly;
for as the human body may not be sustained without
food and nourishment, so may not a man prosper
without temporal good things; and, by means of
them, he may acquire great and potent friends; and
therefore saith Pamphilus, "A neatherd's daugh-
"ter, if she be rich, may choose a husband where
"she will; for not one man in a thousand will re-
"fuse her." And this Pamphilus saith also, "If
"thou be happy," or in other words, "if thou be
"rich, thou shalt find a great number of friends
"and companions: but, if thou become poor, fare-
"well fellowship and friendship!" He saith more-
over, that "those, who are born base, and of
"low degree, are ennobled by riches." And, as by
riches many good things are procured, so do many
evils proceed from poverty; for great need con-
straineth a man to do many bad things; and there-
fore

fore is Poverty called by Cassiodorus, the mother of ruin. And therefore Piers Alphonse saith, "One of the greatest evils, that can happen in this world, is, when a man of a free and generous spirit is constrained, through poverty, to accept of alms from his enemy." And Innocent saith, "Sorrowful and unhappy is the condition of a poor beggar; for, if he ask not for meat, he dieth for hunger; and if he ask it, he dieth for shame; and yet necessity forceth him to ask it." And therefore saith the son of Sirach, "Better it is to die than to beg." (Ecclus. xl. 28.)

For these reasons, which I have given thee, and for many other, which I could give thee, I grant that riches are great blessings to those, who acquire them honestly, and who use them fitly; and therefore I will shew thee, how thou shouldest conduct thyself; first in the acquiring them, and then in the making use of them.

First, thou shouldest acquire them without great eagerness, and not too rapidly, or in too short a time; for a man, that is eager to obtain great riches, abandoneth himself frequently to every species of dishonesty; and therefore saith Solomon, "He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and consider-

“eth not, that poverty shall come upon him.”
(Prov. xxviii. 22.)

And thou oughtest to get riches by thine ingenuity and labour, but without doing wrong to any one; for the Law saith, “No man becometh rich by in-
“juring another;” that is to say, the law of nature forbiddeth such conduct. And Tully saith, “No
“sorrow, nor dread of death, nor any thing, that
“may befall a man, is so much against nature, as a
“man to derive his own benefit from the wrongs he
“doth to another.” And though the great men, and the mighty, obtain riches more easily than thou, yet shouldest thou be industrious to gather what thou canst; for idleness is to be avoided above all things; for Solomon saith, “Slothfulness casteth into a deep
“sleep, and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.”
(Prov. xix. 15.) And again, “He that tilleth his
“land, shall have plenty of bread.” (Prov. xxviii. 19.)

For he, that is given to idleness, can never find a fit time to work for his own benefit; for, as a poet saith, “The idle man excuseth himself in winter,
“because it is too cold, and in summer, because of the
“great heat;” for these reasons, saith Cato, “Awake,
“and incline thyself not over much to sleep; for too
“much rest is the cause of many vices.” And
therefore,

therefore, saith St. Jerom, "Exercise thyself in good
"deeds, that the Devil, who is our enemy, may not
"find thee unemployed; for he doth not readily ap-
"ply himself to those, whom he findeth occupied in
"good works."

Thus then, in getting riches, thou must avoid idleness, and, when thou hast acquired them by thine ingenuity and labour, thou shouldest use them in such a manner, that men may not say, thou art too prodigal, or too sparing; for as an avaricious man is censured on account of his covetousness, so is he also, who is too profuse; for Cato saith, "Use the riches
"thou hast got, in such a manner, that thou be not
"called either a prodigal, or a miser; for it is a
"shame to a man to have a poor heart, and a rich
"purse." He saith also, "The goods, thou hast
"gotten, use in moderation; for they, who idly
"waste what they have, when their own is gone,
"make free with what is another's." I say therefore, that thou shouldest avoid avarice, using thy riches so, that men may not say thou hast buried them, but that they are ready at command, when occasion calls for them. For it is thus, that a wise man reproveth the miser. Why do men by their avarice bury their riches in the earth, when they know they must die,
and

and leave them? And for what cause do they attach themselves so inseparably to their treasures, when they know, or ought to know, that when they leave this world, they can carry nothing with them? And therefore, saith St. Augustine, "The avaricious man " is likened unto hell, which, the more it swalloweth, " the more desire hath it to swallow and devour." Yet in the same degree as thou art desirous not to be esteemed covetous, in the same shouldest thou be anxious not to be deemed prodigal; therefore, saith Tully, "The goods of thine house should not be " kept so close, but that they may be ready, at the " suggestions of thine own benevolence, to supply " the necessities of others; neither should they be so " open, as to be the property of every one."

But, both in the acquiring of riches, as well as in the using of them, thou shouldest have three things in thy heart, our Lord God, conscience, and a good name.

First, thou shouldest have our Lord God in thy heart; and for no riches whatever shouldest thou do a thing, which may, in any manner, offend thy great Creator; for, after the word of Solomon, "Better " is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith." (Prov. xv. 16.)

And

And yet I say, nevertheless, that thou shouldest be as industrious, as thou art able, to get riches, provided thou get them with a good conscience; and the Apostle saith, "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience." (2 Corinth. i. 12.) And the wise man saith, "The substance of a man is good, and full, when sin is not in his conscience."

Afterwards, both in the acquiring, as well as in the using of thy riches, thou shouldest do thy diligence to preserve a good name; for Solomon saith, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." (Prov. xxii. 1.)

And, surely, he deserveth not the name of gentleman, who doth not, by obeying God and his conscience, preserve also a good name; and Cassiodore saith, "That it is a sign of a gentle heart, when a man is desirous to have a good reputation;" and therefore, saith St. Augustine, "There are two things, that are right needful, a good conscience, and a good character; and he that trusteth so much in his good conscience, as to despise and set at nought the estimation he is held in, displays but a low spirit."

Now

Now have I shewed thee, how thou shouldest demean thyself in the getting of riches, and in what manner thou shouldest use them ; and yet I see, from the confidence thou puttest in them, that thou wouldest willingly proceed to violence. But it is my advice, that thou commence not war in confidence of thy riches, for they are insufficient to carry it on ; and therefore, saith a Philosopher, “ That man, who
“ is fond of war, can never possess riches equal to
“ his wants ; for the richer he is, the greater sums
“ must he expend, if he would ensure honour and
“ victory.” And Solomon saith, “ Riches make
“ themselves wings, they flee away, as an eagle,
“ towards heaven.” (Prov. xxiii. 5.)

And, my beloved lord, though by your riches you might command many men, yet it is not wise to begin war, when peace may be obtained both to your honour and advantage ; for the success of battles depends not on the numbers in the field, nor the courage of the warriors, but is in the hand of the Almighty Disposer of events ; and therefore Judas Maccabeus, when he went to fight against his adversaries, whose numbers were greater and stronger than his own, comforted his little army with these reflections : “ It is in the power,” said he, “ of the Almighty,

“ to

“to give the victory to the few, as easily as to the many; for victory cometh not from the multitude of the people, but from the God of heaven.”

And therefore, my dear lord, as no man is certain that he is worthy that God should grant him the victory (for Solomon saith, “The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water”); therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with. (Prov. xvii. 14.) For in war there are great perils, and a great man is as soon slain as a small one. This the events recorded in the second Book of Kings testify. And since the perils of war are so great, a man should avoid it as much as possible.

When Dame Prudence had spoken, Melibeus thus answered: I see well, Dame Prudence, by your reasons and arguments, that you are utterly averse to war; but you have not given me your advice, what other conduct to pursue.

My advice, she replied, is, that you accord with your adversaries, and that you be at peace with them; for it is said, “by concord and harmony small things increase, by discord the greatest are brought to nothing;” and our Lord saith, “Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.” (Matthew v. 9.) And you know well,
that

that one of the greatest duties of this life is peace and unity.

Ah! said Melibeus, I now see plainly, that thou payest no regard to my dignity and my honour. For thou knowest well, that mine adversaries have brought on this contention, by being the first to commit outrage, neither do they sue for peace, nor are desirous to be reconciled. Wouldest thou then, that I go, and implore forgiveness of them? That were not for mine honour; for as too great homeliness inspireth contempt, so doth also too great humility.

Then began Dame Prudence to make shew of being in wrath, and said, In truth, sir, though you deny it, your honour and prosperity is as dear to me, as mine own; and that it has been ever so, yourself, till this moment, have never contradicted. And, had I said, that you ought to have sued for peace and reconciliation, I should not have said wrong; for the wise man saith, "The dissension beginneth by another, but the reconciliation beginneth by thyself." And the Apostle saith, "Eschew evil and do good, seek peace and en- sue it." (1 Peter iii. 11.)

Yet

Yet I say not, that thou shouldest rather sue to thine adversaries for peace and reconciliation, than they to thee ; for I know well, that thou art so hard-hearted that thou wilt do nothing that I advise. And Solomon saith, " He that hardeneth his heart, " shall fall into mischief." (Prov. xxviii. 14.)

When Melibeus had heard Dame Prudence make shew of being in wrath, he thus said to her : I pray you, Dame, be not displeased at what I say ; for I know well, that I am in anger ; and it is no wonder that they who are in anger know not what they say or do ; therefore it is said, " The troubled eye seeth " not clear."

But say, and counsel me, as you think best ; for I am ready to do whatever you desire ; and the more you tell me of my folly, the more I think you love me, and the kinder you are to me ; for Solomon saith, " Open rebuke is better than secret love ; " faithful are the words of a friend, but the kisses of " an enemy are deceitful." (Prov. xxvii. 5, 6.)

Then said Dame Prudence, I do not make shew of anger, but in order to do you service ; for Solomon saith, " Answer not a fool according to his " folly." (Prov. xxvi. 4.)

Then

Then said Melibeus, I shall not strive to argue against the many good reasons you have produced; but give me your counsel in a few words, and I am ready to pursue it.

Then Dame Prudence freely opened her mind to him; and above all things, she said, I counsel you to make your peace with God; for, as I have said to you before, God, on account of your sins, hath suffered these outrages to be done to you; and, if you do as I say, God will send your adversaries unto you, and make them fall at your feet in token of obedience to you; for Solomon saith, "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him." (Prov. xvi. 7.)

And, I pray you, let me speak with your adversaries in private, so that they may not know it be done with your consent; and when I shall have discovered their thoughts and intentions, I may be able to counsel you the more securely.

Dame, said Melibeus, use your own discretion, for I put myself wholly under your guidance and direction.

Then Dame Prudence, when she saw the good disposition of her husband, deliberated with herself,
how

how she might bring the affair to a good issue; and, when she saw a fit occasion, she sent to these adversaries to come to her in private, and shewed wisely unto them the great advantages and blessings of peace, and the great evils and perils that arise from contention; and in a mild manner represented to them the necessity of their repentance, for the great injuries they had done to her husband Melibeus, her daughter, and herself.

And, when they had heard the goodly words of Dame Prudence, they were surprised and delighted with her. Ah, lady! said they, you have shewed to us the blessing of peace, after the saying of the prophet David: and reconciliation, which we are not worthy of, and which we ought to sue for with contrition and humility, you yourself of your great goodness have offered unto us. Now see we well that the wisdom of Solomon is true; for he saith, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." (Prov. xv. 1.)

Most readily, they said, we refer the matter to you, and are willing to do whatever my lord Melibeus shall command us. And therefore, dear and kind lady, we pray and beseech you with all humility, that you will, in your great goodness, fulfil in deed, what you have so kindly advised; for we are truly sensible,

that we have injured my lord Melibeus above measure, and that we have no power to make him amends; and therefore we are willing to bind ourselves and our friends, to do what he shall command. But, peradventure, so great is his wrath and resentment for the injuries we have done him, that he will enjoin us such a penance, as we may not be able to sustain; and therefore, noble lady, we resort to the compassion of your truly feminine heart, that you will take such steps, that our offences, though great, may not bring ourselves and our friends to total ruin and destruction.

It is certainly, said Prudence, a hard and perilous thing for a man to submit himself entirely to the arbitration of his enemy; for the son of Sirach saith, "Hear me, O ye great men of the people, and hearken with your ears, ye rulers of the congregation. Give not thy wife, thy brother and friend power over thee while thou livest." (Ecclus. xxxiii. 18, 19.)

Now since he forbiddeth a man to resign the right over his person either to a brother or a friend, he forbiddeth him, of course, by a much stronger reason, to resign it to an enemy; and though I counsel you, that ye do not distrust my dear lord (because I know
him

him to be gentle, generous and courteous, and, least of all, greedy of money; for he is desirous of nothing but due honour and respect); yet I know well, that, in this affair, he will be guided by my counsel; and I doubt not, by God's grace, but that I shall effect between you a thorough reconciliation.

To this they with one voice replied, We resign, O kindest lady, both ourselves and fortunes to your disposal, and are ready to come, on the day you will please to fix, to give you the fullest security for our submitting ourselves to the commands of my lord Melibeus.

When Dame Prudence had heard their answer, she bade them privately depart; and returning to her lord, she told him how full of sorrow and repentance she had found his adversaries, acknowledging with great humility the injuries they had committed, ready to submit to the sentence he should pronounce on them; but imploring at the same time his mercy and compassion.

Then said Melibeus, He is worthy of forgiveness, that excuseth not his ill deeds, but, acknowledging them, and repenting of them, sues for pardon and indulgence; for Seneca saith, "Where confession is, there is remission and forgiveness, for confession is

T 2

" neighbour

"neighbour to innocence;" and therefore, as to my own part, I assent to peace; but it is good that we do nothing without the counsel of our friends.

Then was Prudence right glad, and said, Surely, sir, you have well and wisely answered; for as by the counsels of your friends you were stirred up to revenge, therefore should you not make peace without their accord; for the Law saith, "There is nothing juster, than that by the same powers, by which decrees were enacted, by the same should they be repealed."

Then, without delay, Prudence assembled her kindred and her old friends, that were faithful and discreet, and told them, in the presence of Melibeus, the whole circumstances of the case, as have been above described, and requested them to give their advice, what it were best to do. And, when they had considered the matter with great care and deliberation, and had fully and diligently weighed it in all points, they were unanimous for peace; and advised, that Melibeus should cordially receive those, who had done him these injuries, to his favour and forgiveness.

When Dame Prudence heard not only her lord, but his friends also, assent to her opinions, her heart rejoiced

rejoiced gladly, and she said, Thus speaketh the old proverb, "The good that thou canst do to-day, do it forthwith, and delay it not till to-morrow." And it is therefore my advice, that you immediately send messengers, such as are discreet and wise, unto your adversaries, telling them that, if they would treat of peace, they should come to us without delay. This was put in execution speedily. And when these trespassers, who had now repented of their ill deeds, received the message, they were much pleased, and, returning a mild and modest answer, expressed their thanks to Melibeus, and his assembled friends, and prepared without delay to attend the messengers.

In their way towards the palace of Melibeus, they collected some chosen friends to be their sureties; and when they were come into his presence, he thus spoke to them: Ye know well, that ye have, without cause, committed great injuries against me, my wife Prudence, and my daughter; for ye have entered my house by violence, and have done such outrages, as all men know are deserving of death; and therefore, I here demand of you, whether ye be willing to submit the punishment for your offences to the sentence myself and my wife shall pronounce on you.

T 3

Then

Then the wisest of the three answered for himself and fellows: Sir, said he, we know well, that we are unworthy to present ourselves in the presence of so great a lord, whom we are conscious we have so highly and so unjustly offended: but, relying on that goodness and benevolence of character, to which all the world beareth witness, we are ready to yield ourselves to your disposal, beseeching you, of your great kindness, to consider the sincerity of our repentance, and to grant us forgiveness for the great outrages we have committed; for we well know, that the forgiving sweetness of your pity exceeds even the atrocious villainy of our guilt.

Then Melibeus, with great benignity, raised them from the ground; and, having received the bonds and obligations both of themselves and their sureties, and their oaths also, by which they bound themselves to submit to his sentence, he assigned them a certain day, on which they should return, and receive judgment for their offences. These things being done, they returned to their own homes.

And when Dame Prudence saw a fit occasion, she asked her lord Melibeus, what punishment he would inflict upon them. To which Melibeus answered,

It

It is my design to make them forfeit all their goods and possessions, and to banish them for ever.

Surely, said Prudence, this is a cruel sentence, and much against reason ; for you have riches enough of your own, and need not the goods of others ; and thereby you may get the name of a covetous and rapacious man, which ought ever to be avoided ; for, according to the saying of the Apostle, “ The love of money is the root of all evil.” (1 Timothy vi. 10.) And therefore it were better for you, to lose part of your own substance, than, for such a cause, to rob them of theirs ; for better it is to lose with credit, than to gain with reproach ; and it is the duty of every man to do his diligence to get him a good name ; nor shall he be only anxious to preserve it, when he hath gotten it, but shall persist also in doing still more and more good, to brighten and renew it ; for it is written, that “ the good name, that once was, but “ is not renewed, soon passeth away.”

And, touching what you say, that you will drive these offenders into exile—I think such punishment is far out of measure, considering the manner in which they have submitted themselves to you. And it is written, that “ He is worthy to lose his privilege, that “ misuseth the power and the authority that is given

“him.” And, suppose you might by law sentence them to that punishment (though I firmly believe you have no such authority), perhaps you might not be able to put it into execution, and then matters would return to the same contention as before; and therefore, if you expect men to pay respect to you, you must be more lenient in your sentences and judgments; for it is written, “Him, that com-
“mandeth most courteously, men most readily obey.” And I, therefore, beg you, that you will in this instance over-rule your passions; for Seneca saith, “He
“that overcometh his heart, getteth twice the vic-
“tory.” And Tully saith, “There is nothing so
“commendable in a great man, as to be mild and
“gentle, and easily appeased.” And I pray you, in the punishments you are about to inflict on these offenders, you do it with such forbearance, as may preserve your good name; that men may have cause to praise you, for the tenderneſs of your pity; and that yourself may have no cause to repent of what you have done; for Seneca saith, “He over-
“cometh in an evil manner, that repenteth of his
“victory.” Wherefore I beseech you, let mercy be in your heart, to the intent that God Almighty may at the last judgment have mercy upon you; for St.

James

James saith, "He shall have judgment without mercy, that sheweth no mercy." (James ii. 13.)

When Melibeus had heard the strong reasons of Dame Prudence, and her wise instructions, his heart began to incline to her opinion; and weighing well her good designs, he at length brought himself to assent fully and entirely to her counsels; and he thanked God, from whom proceedeth all goodness and all virtue, for that he had given him a wife of such great discretion. And when the day came, when his adversaries should appear before him, he spoke to them in these words: Although of your folly and high presumption ye have grievously offended me, yet as I now see the great humility and contrition of your hearts, I am thereby inclined to do you grace and mercy; wherefore I receive you again into my favour, and forgive heartily the offences ye have committed against me and those who are dear to me; hoping that in like manner the God of all mercies will forgive us our offences at the hour of our death; for, doubtless, if we be sorry and repent truly of our sins, our Lord God is a God of mercy, and will forgive us our trespasses, and will at length bring us to that bliss which shall never have an end. Amen.

PRO-

PROLOGUE

T O

THE MONK'S TALE.

OUR joyous Host, when ended was the tale,
"Rather," he said, "than a good butt of ale,
"Would I, that my dear wife this tale should hear
"(If haply she would lend a patient ear):
"For (truth to say), somewhat too prone to strive,
"She's much unlike good Melibeus' wife.

"Thus when, with rage o'ercome, I beat my
knaves,

"Instant she brings me more and heavier staves;
"And cries, O rascals, slay them every one,
"Nor leave among them one unbroken bone!
"And if in church, by bow submiss and low,
"Honour to her a neighbour should not shew;
"Or if, for want of manners quite correct,
"Should shew, good heavens! some actual disrespect;
"Soon as she home returns, the storm begins,
"And my poor ears are stunn'd for others' sins.

"O heartless

"O heartless coward! wild with rage, she cries,
 "Whose dastard spirit will not vengeful rise,
 "When thy poor wife bears such indignities!
 "A man art thou? creation's mighty lord?
 "No! take my distaff, and give me thy sword!
 "Then forth again she breaks, O luckless fate,
 "To wed a paltry, dastard, milkfop mate!
 "Who, though insulted by each coxcomb wight,
 "Dares not assert an injur'd spouse's right.—
 "These are her taunts, if to her numerous foes
 "I do not, when she bids, my life expose;
 "And much I fear, on an unlucky day,
 "Some friend or neighbour she will make me slay;
 "For I am perilous with knife in hand,
 "Though her, I own, I never dare withstand.
 "Hapless is he, who 'gainst her will persist;
 "For, ah! what man's so stout that may resist
 "The active vengeance of her brawny fist?
 "But we'll of this no more—with some good tale
 "My lord the Monk shall next our ears regale.
 "Lo! Rochester's fair spire appears in view!
 "Quick then, my lord, and give us something new.
 "My lord I call you, for, I speak with shame,
 "To me's unknown your reverence' proper name.
 "Will

" Will you Dan John be call'd ? or do you choose
" That I the nobler name Dan Pedro use ?
" Say whence thou'rt sprung ? of noble lineage born,
" Do birth and ancestry thy name adorn ?
" For by the freedom of thy portly mien,
" And thy skin's sleekness, it may well be seen,
" That, where thou go'st, the pasture's rich and
green. }

" And in thy convent high in office plac'd,
" With formal pomp and proper titles grac'd,
" Thee there await, I ween, obsequious hands,
" Prepar'd to execute thy dread commands.
" No novice raw, or puny cloisterer thou,
" Starv'd by observance of thy holy vow ;
" But, fed in plenty's lap, thy strength's confest,
" By thy large bones, and broad and brawny chest.

" Shame on the wretch ! whose weak and abject
mind

" To a cold barren cell such powers confin'd !
" For who's than thee more fitted to fulfil
" (Didst thou but dare) thine own and Heaven's high
will ?

" Soon, like a Patriarch, smiling should'st thou see
" Innumeros shoots bloom round the parent tree.

" Men,

"Men, were I Pope, should lead a different life,
"And each shorn lusty monk should have his wife:
"For now Heav'n's best designs are sadly cross'd,
"And a monk's life is but *Love's Labour lost*:
"Hence laymen, now a puny stunted race,
"Religion's portly sons ne'er dare to face,
"Unable grown, poor weak, unfruitful elves,
"T' extend the chain of being past themselves:
"Their wives, of hateful barrenness afraid,
"Are driven to call the priesthood to their aid.
"Be not in wrath, my lord, at what I say;
"Full many a wholesome truth is spoke in play."

The Monk with patience all his banter took,
And thus in true good humour briefly spoke:

"Freely a tale I'll tell; or is your ear
"Pleas'd good St. Edward's great exploits to hear?
"Or I'll recite, if this you rather choose,
"Th' impassion'd labours of the tragic muse.
"Hers is the task to paint th' unequal strife,
"The sad vicissitudes of human life:
"Now the fall'n hero's unexampled woes
"She tells indignant in unfetter'd prose,
"Her glowing rage now nobler pours along
"In the warm numbers of immortal song.

"But

“ But if, my worthy friends, when I relate
“ The Hero's fall, or captive Monarch's fate,
“ I haply should invent the well-known tale,
“ Or in exactness of the dates should fail,
“ Blame not my zeal ; for this, I hope, 's confes'd,
“ That, to deserve your praise, I'll do my best.”

THE

THE MONK'S TALE.

NOW then attend, and I of those will tell,
 Who from the heights of envied greatness fell,
 Doom'd life's severest scourges to endure,
 To fall from bliss, and never hope a cure !
 For ah ! when fortune turns, what human force
 May stay the progress of her wayward course ?
 May these examples curb o'erweening pride !
 And may none hence in her false smiles confide !

LUCIFER.

With the first victim of presumptuous sin,
 Immortal Lucifer, my tales begin.
 An angel form'd, from Heaven's high bliss he fell
 Down to the regions dark of yawning hell ;
 There doom'd to expiate his rebellious crime
 To the last moment of unceasing time.

ADAM.

Adam, by God's own hand divinely made,
 Roam'd unrestrain'd in Eden's blissful shade ;
 To his free use all-kind and bounteous Heaven,
 One tree except, each lovely fruit had given ;

And

And there in joy supreme he long remain'd,
'Till sin's rank poison all his soul had stain'd :
'Then (ah ! too justly) was he doom'd to know
'The sad dire portion of increasing woe.

SAMPSON.

Lo ! Manoah's son ! whose fame fill'd wide the earth,
Promis'd by Heav'n's own angel ere his birth !
Favour'd by God, he all in strength surpass'd,
'Till, oft entreated, he betray'd at last
The mighty secret, where his prowess lay,
And to his folly fell too soon the prey.

A roaring lion once unarm'd he slew,
And his rent carcase to the winds he threw :
While his breast swell'd with wild vindictive pride
For various wrongs, but chief his wife denied,
Three hundred foxes quick in rage he caught,
And to his father's yellow corn-fields brought ;
Then to the tail of each his fearless hand
Tied, his revenge to glut, a flaming brand ;
And mid the corn he drove each frightened beast,
Pleas'd with the ravage his fierce eyes to feast.

A thousand fell, slain by his hand alone,
While his sole weapon was an ass's bone ;
And when with slaughter tir'd, for raging thirst
His swollen and throbbing veins well nigh had burst.

Fervent

Fervent to Heav'n's Almighty Power he pray'd,
To send refreshing moisture to his aid ;
When from a wondrous tooth, that erst had grown
Fix'd in the socket of the slaughtering bone,
Sudden there issued (new and strange to tell)
A copious stream, as from a springing well :
With this the mighty man his thirst allay'd,
As in the book of Judges is display'd.

The gates of Gaza from the walls he tore,
And to a hill on his huge shoulders bore.
O Sampson ! Sampson ! had not woman's art
Work'd on the softness of thy yielding heart,
Th' united strength of thousands would have fail'd,
And thine own arm against an host prevail'd.
In manly temperance' hardy school he grew,
And wine's insidious joys he never knew :
His unshorn ringlets his fair forehead grac'd,
And (so will'd Heaven) in these his strength was plac'd.
Short was, alas ! the triumph he enjoy'd,
For female wiles too soon his strength destroy'd ;
To the false Dalila he weakly told
Th' important secret, who her lover sold
To his fierce foes ; and, while he sleeping lay,
From his bare forehead cut his locks away :

Rous'd from his dreams, he wak'd in wild surprise,
And soon in tortures wail'd his sightless eyes.
Whilst grew his head's fair honours unconfin'd,
No force could hold him, and no chain could bind;
But, rest of these, he fell a helpless prey,
And long in dark confinement's gloom he lay;
Doom'd base derision's poignant taunts to feel,
While in the mill's dull round he turn'd the wheel.
O Sampson ! Sampson ! he, the judge erewhile
Of Israel's tribes, while blest with Heav'n's sweet
smile ;

He, whose firm hands the sword of justice held,
And who in wisdom, as in strength, excell'd,
Ah ! how he fell ! doom'd, hopeless, to deplore
Joys tasted once, but tasted then no more :
For when his foes, on Dagon's honour'd day,
(Sacred to custom'd sport and festive play)
Bade him come forth to please with fond surprise
Their barbarous hearts, and glut their gaping eyes,
His soul indignant the base mockery spurn'd,
And with just vengeance his swoln bosom burn'd ;
Furious the massy columns, that sustain'd
The crowded dome, he seiz'd, and forceful strain'd,
And

And from their bases the huge pillars tore ;
 When tottering with vast crash, and wild uproar,
 Thundering the fabric fell, and, dire to say,
 Crush'd by its fall and pierc'd with dread dismay,
 Himself and foes one mingl'd ruin lay. }

HERCULES *.

Next be our theme Alcides' honour'd name,
 A second Sampson, and perhaps the same ;
 Alike for courage and for strength renown'd,
 And in each bold emprise with conquest crown'd.
 Nemea's vanquish'd Lion's well-earn'd spoils
 Were the first meed of his victorious toils ;
 Next he the Centaurs' direful race subdued,
 And the half-female Harpies' monstrous brood ;
 In death he clos'd the Dragon's watchful eyes,
 And from the garden bore the golden prize ;
 Hell's three-tongued Monster from her depths he
 drove,
 And brought him trembling to the realms above ;
 With generous rage the Thracian Pest he slew,
 And his gor'd limbs to his own coursers threw.

* In this account of the labours of Hercules, Chaucer has evidently copied Boethius, l. iv. Met. 7.

TYRWHITT, 14101.

The Birds obscene by human carnage fed;
 The fiery Hydra's ever-fruitful head,
 Each, in their turn, beneath his faulchion bled;
 The vast Anteus, glorying in his birth,
 Lifeless he stretch'd upon his parent Earth;
 And with fierce rage and furious gripe he tore
 The bristly trophies from the foaming Boar.
 Since time began, man's noblest friend confest,
 From earth he swept each dire and monstrous pest,
 Wide as the world's expanse outstretch'd his fame,
 And every clime rever'd his honour'd name;
 This his own pillars could alone confine,
 Each plac'd on ample nature's utmost line.

Sad Deianira, doom'd by Heaven to prove
 The cold requital of neglected love,
 Sent him a poison'd vest, in hope once more
 Affection's cooling ardour to restore:
 But the dire gift, unmeet for soothing love,
 Instant the hapless youth to madness drove;
 On a huge pile, that near him flaming stood,
 Prepar'd to drink the wonted victim's blood,
 (His brain by frenzy's raging tortures fir'd)
 Furious he leap'd, and in the flames expir'd.

Thus

Thus fell the great Alcides, nature's pride—
 Who then in Fortune's smiles may hence confide?
 Check'd in their mid career, her minions feel
 The sad relapses of her changeful wheel.
 Watch then her wiles! of her base arts beware!
 For oft, elusive of all human care,
 She spreads, when least you expect, th' insidious
 snare.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

What power of potent words may e'er relate,
 Imperial Babylon! thy gorgeous state?
 Who may describe thy glowing sceptre's rays?
 And thy vast throne's commix'd and mighty blaze?
 Twice did thy haughty lord triumphant ride
 Beside devoted Jordan's vanquish'd tide;
 The fairest sons of Israel's royal race
 (Th' insulting victor's triumph doom'd to grace)
 Far from their much-lov'd Salem's blest resort
 Were driven sad exiles to the tyrant's court;
 And these among, of wide and honour'd fame,
 War's hapless victim, holy Daniel came.
 When of Chaldæa's boasted seers was found
 Not one their monarch's visions to expound,

To him, by Heav'n's unerring light inspir'd,
He clear'd each² import dark, as he requir'd.

Impell'd by false religion's abject fear,
The king had bade his ready minions rear
A form of size immense ; with mandate loud
His heralds instant call th' obedient crowd,
Of ev'ry age, and sex, and name, and race,
Who in his ample empire's boundless space
Breath'd vital air, with prostrate homage low
Before the idol's giant form to bow ;
Which, if refus'd, the furnace' flames alone
Might the rash victim's wilful scorn atone.
The menace dire the sons of Israel brav'd,
Sure of that aid, which oft their fires had sav'd ;
Fearless the burning flames untouch'd they trod,
For him what power may hurt, whose trust is God ?

His heart, with wealth elate, and swoln with pride,
The powers of earth and heaven the king defied,
Till in the semblance of a sylvan beast,
Compell'd on herbs, and grass, and roots to feast,
The haughty monarch learn'd at length to know,
That kings are doom'd in turn to taste of woe :
Transform'd, the flowing honours of his head
Like eagles' plumes adown his waist were spread ;

His

His hands he saw, with feather'd down o'ergrown,
 Bird-like were arm'd with talons not their own.
 Thus hapless did he fare, till were fulfill'd
 Th' appointed years, which Heav'n's just laws had
 will'd;

Then to his God his chasten'd soul return'd,
 And with warm love and zeal unwearied burn'd.

BELSHAZZAR.

Yet ill-instructed by their fire's disgrace,
 Pride's direst curses scourg'd his haughty race :
 Belshazzar next succeeds, whose recreant mind
 To basest idols all his soul resign'd ;
 Yet soon Heav'n's righteous arm his pride chastiz'd,
 And broke the sceptre, he so vainly priz'd.
 "For, on a day, when each Chaldæan lord,
 Call'd by his master to his festal board,
 The royal banquet grac'd, with power elate
 Counting his slaves the flatter'd despot fate ;
 "And instant forth," with tone of joy, he cries,
 "Be each rich vessel brought, the well-earn'd prize
 "My honour'd fire's resistless ardour won,
 "When to his arm fell Judah's vanquish'd throne :
 "From these libations copious we will pour
 "To the great gods, Chaldæa's sons adore."

Then did the king, and his tumultuous crew,
With heighten'd zeal the banquet's joys renew;
Those cups, which erst the holy temple grac'd,
Now in rude mirth by hands unmeet embrac'd,
And e'en by harlots' lips impure profan'd,
Oft and again to foul excess were drain'd;
Till sudden rous'd, and pierc'd with dread appal,
The king with eyes of horror view'd the wall,
Whereon self-mov'd a wondrous hand unknown
Had the fam'd writing trac'd upon the stone.
Not one in vast Chaldæa's wide domain
Could the dark legend on the wall explain.
The queen at length the Jewish captive sought,
And holy Daniel to the monarch brought;
Who thus—"To thee, O king! full well is known
"Th' unrivall'd grandeur of thy father's throne;
"To him in wide profusion generous Heav'n
"Wealth, empire, honour, had indulgent given:
"But pride defeated God's benign intent,
"And poison'd every boon his mercy sent:
"For this, (so will'd his wife and just decree)
"Driven from the bands of sweet society;
"Torn from his throne, and e'en his figure chang'd,
"In form a beast, the lonely wilds he rang'd;
"There,

"There, wretched outcast! 'mong the sylvan brood,
"Condemn'd to pick his poor precarious food,
"Long time he liv'd; till to his harden'd heart
"God deign'd his grace all-potent to impart;
"Then to his former state once more restor'd,
"Heav'n's hallow'd King repentant he ador'd.
"Him though fell pride to woes so poignant led,
"Still the same steps too faithful dost thou tread:
"Foe to thy God, thy rebel heart alone
"Bows to base idols, form'd of senseless stone.
"Thyself hast dar'd, amid thy wanton train,
"The temple's holy vessels to profane,
"Thine impious lips did Heav'n's dread power deride,
"And boldly God's avenging arm defied.
"'Twas for this cause, by offended Heav'n's command,
"That on the wall thus wrote the self-mov'd hand;
"And this the awful doom the words portend—
"O king, thine empire hastens to its end."
By the keen swords of hostile Persians slain,
That night Belshazzar clos'd his impious reign.
Thus Fortune, whom she destines, soon forsakes,
And from him wealth, and fame, and friends she takes.

ZENOBIA.

ZENOBIA*.

From the rich blood of Persia's monarchs sprung,
 Zenobia's praises through the world are sung;
 By culture polish'd, and with conquest crown'd,
 Alike for arts, and arms, was she renown'd.

In childhood's tender years her manly mind
 Each softer care and female art resign'd;
 Pleas'd to the woods in Dian's train to go,
 She vied in fleetness with the bounding doe;
 And in the trembling victim's panting heart,
 Sure of her aim, she plung'd her purpled dart.
 Mature of strength, with sinewy arm she tore
 The bristly trophies from the furious boar;
 Leopards and lions to her force would yield,
 Stretch'd by her arm upon the blood-stain'd field.
 Such were the toils she bore with keen delight;
 Oft on the mountain's brow, the orb of night
 Saw her fleet step imprint the new-fall'n dew,
 Intent her hardy pastime to pursue;
 Unshelter'd oft, by toil to rest compos'd,
 In sleep's soft soundest bands her eyes she clos'd.

* V. Boccace De Cas. Vir. l. viii. c. 7; & De Claris Mul.
 from which our author has plainly taken almost every circum-
 stance of his narration. TYRWHITT, ver. 14253.

Mistress alike of each athletic game,
That knits by toil robust the vigorous frame,
With her none dar'd, of strength whate'er or age,
In wrestling's sturdy conflict to engage.

Long while in virgin freedom she remain'd,
And social wedlock's proffer'd bands disdain'd :
At length her kindness Odenate implor'd,
And him she accepted for her wedded lord.
Discord's dire jars did ne'er their days molest,
But love's pure sweets their happy union blest.

Yet though, in combat on th' embattled field,
To none in deeds of death she deign'd to yield,
In sober wisdom's grave pursuits she joy'd,
And reason's calmer feasts her hours employ'd.
The chace she lov'd, but gladly she resign'd
Its meaner joys, to form her cultur'd mind :
Yet did she not disdain the gaudy show,
Which scepter'd potentates to grandeur owe ;
The purest gems of Asia deck'd her throne,
Or shot bright radiance from her costly zone ;
Where'er she led her valiant troops around,
The palm of bright success their labours crown'd ;
Her power resistless swept the conquer'd east,
And Rome's bright trophies oft her fame increas'd.

What

What various toils her dauntless soul engag'd,
What kings she conquer'd, and what wars she wag'd,
What woes at length the hapless queen beset,
Let tender Petrarch's flowing numbers tell.

Nor with less power she rul'd, when adverse fate
Call'd from her aid her brave and honour'd mate ;
E'en then, supported by her arm alone,
Increasing splendor mark'd her envied throne :
So oft with hills of slain the plains she strew'd,
With rage so fierce her foes so oft pursu'd,
That every prince around her grace implor'd,
Blest, if unhurt he escap'd her conquering sword.
With dread her rapid strides Egyptia saw,
Yet dar'd she ne'er her ready sword to draw ;
Against her Syria's lords fix'd hate impell'd,
But fear's chill power their willing hands withheld ;
Arabia's valiant princes pin'd in vain,
Aw'd by her threats, they only dar'd complain.
She check'd e'en Rome's fierce eagle's bold career,
And taught the world's proud lords her arms to fear.
But ah ! with fortune's choicest sweets combin'd,
The dregs of bitterest gall too oft we find.
Thus this fam'd queen (the beams of sunshine past)
To misery's darkest gloom was plung'd at last.

Fortune

Fortune at length her long-lov'd favourite fail'd,
And o'er the hapless queen her foes prevail'd ;
Driven in disorder from the routed field,
Her flying troops to fierce Aurelian yield ;
And (direr still) herself by fate's stern doom
Was led, sad captive, to insulting Rome :
There in keen mockery on her head she bore
Her crown's lost honours, hers, alas ! no more ;
Whilst round her arms, and o'er her sigh-swoln breast,
Chains, deck'd with taunting gold, her woes confess'd.

NERO.

To Nero's fiend-like soul the fates denied
Virtue's sweet grace, but largely they supplied
Those meaner gifts, which vulgar eyes admire,
And ceaseless crave with unappeas'd desire :
Wide as the world's extent his empire lay,
And every climate bow'd beneath his sway ;
Proud was each region to their lord to pour
The copious tribute of their varied store ;
In gayest splendour deck'd, his gorgeous vest
Glow'd with each trophy from the plunder'd east ;
The diamond's blaze, the sapphire's softer hue,
Clad in her robe of bright ethereal blue,

With

With these commix'd the modest pearl was seen,
And the gay emerald bright in vivid green :
Yet did in vain the brightest gems combine
In lovely radiance on that breast to shine,
Which, to each deed of deadliest darkness prone,
The furies, imps of hell, possess'd alone.
The hateful monster view'd with savage joy
Wide-wasting flames imperial Rome destroy ;
To his curst ear the shriek of heart-wrung woe
Could, like sweet sounds, sensations bland bestow.
Born to disgrace mankind, with unheard pride
T' excel in every odious vice he tried,
And nature's laws and man's alike defied ;
Not e'en (dire deed) a sister's honour'd name
Had power to curb his fierce incestuous flame ;
Nor could a mother's tender tears restrain
His impious hands from murder's hateful stain.

Form'd in fair culture's plastic mould, his youth,
Bless'd with the smiles of innocence and truth,
Virtue's pure laws long while in peace obey'd,
And well his wise preceptor's toils repaid :
Then his warm heart with grateful ardour glow'd,
And him he honour'd, to whom all he ow'd ;

Then

Then from his seat respectful would he rise,
 Whene'er his honour'd master met his eyes.
 But soon life's giddy joys o'erwhelm'd his soul,
 Soon he renounc'd fair virtue's sweet controul :
 His master then with joy no more he view'd,
 E'en with fell hatred he the sage pursued,
 And in his blood at length his hands embrued.

}

But fortune soon her sheltering arm withdrew,
 Then ill's unnumber'd quick his steps pursue ;
 With uproar wild th' indignant Romans rose,
 An injur'd nation, and an host of foes :
 With conscious fear the hopeless tyrant flies ;
 Where'er he turns, he hears a people's cries,
 Who load with curses dire th' affrighted skies.
 Appal'd he shrinks with still-increasing dread,
 No shelter finds to hide his hated head.

}

In vain some pitying friend his tears implor'd,
 Deep in his tortur'd breast to plunge his sword ;
 Unpitied, and alone, he life resign'd,
 The scourge, the curse, the scorn of all mankind.

HOLOFERNES.

Through the wide east was Holofernes known,
 The first great satrap of the Persian throne ;

Him,

Him, sent to scourge rebellious Israel's race,
 A female arm o'erwhelm'd with dire disgrace;
 Judith, with patriot ardour nobly fir'd,
 To save her country from the foe aspir'd;
 In friendly guise the hostile camp she sought,
 A tale delusive to the leader brought.
 The tale, commended by her winning charms,
 The wonted foresight of the chief disarms:
 Safe in the shelter of his tent receiv'd,
 The daring maid Bethulia's fears reliev'd,
 Smote off, in sleep's soft hour, the tyrant's head,
 And with the reeking spoil in safety fled.

ANTIOCHUS*.

Renown'd Antiochus! thy wide-spread name,
 The pride of Persia once, at length the shame,
 For deeds of greatness through the world wast known,
 Fame, splendour, honour, empire, all thine own;
 Wasted by fortune's favouring gale so high,
 Thy towering hopes aspir'd to touch the sky.
 Drunk with success, thy proud and daring soul
 Thought thy strong arm might nature's laws controul,

* This tragedy is a poetical paraphrase of 2 Maccabees, c. ix.

TYRWHITT, ver. 14493.

Might

Might sink the mountains to the lowly plain,
And e'en old Ocean's foaming rage restrain.
Oft, swoln to madness with indignant pride,
Hast thou the thunders of high heaven defied;
With scorn each subject nation hast thou view'd,
And God's own people with fix'd hate pursued.
Gall'd that thy troops, in war's eventful field,
Were forc'd to Israel's hated sons to yield,
Thy mighty host was rang'd in fierce array,
To Salem's towers was mark'd their destin'd way—
But, check'd by Heaven, soon sinks thy haughty rage,
And nearer cares thy pensive thoughts engage;
To dire disease a prey, thy putrid blood,
(That leap'd erewhile like a resistless flood,
And taught thine eyes with vengeful flames to glow)
Now scarce is felt with feeblest pace to flow;
From the foul mass corruption's millions breed,
Spread their wide waste, and on thine entrails feed;
Thy noisome stench no potent spells may cure,
None near abide, and scarce thyself endure!
See! far from men the wretched outcast flies,
And in a lonely mountain friendless dies!

ALEXANDER.

Who hath not heard of Philip's wondrous son,
The world's great dread, the pride of Macedon?

VOL. III.

X

Conquest

Conquest he taught with bolder wing to soar
 O'er untried climes, and lands unknown before ;
 Till earth's remotest bounds too soon obtain'd,
 He wept, that nought unconquer'd yet remain'd.
 The world he won; but, ah ! himself he lost ;
 By uncurb'd passion's boist'rous billows tost ;
 Wine's frantic joys, and love's licentious flame,
 Still blast his laurels, and obscure his fame.
 Yet did full soon this meteor disappear,
 For twelve short years he press'd his bold career,
 Then o'er that arm foul poison's power prevail'd,
 Which nations, leagued in war, in vain assail'd.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

From humble state to empire's envied height,
 Immortal Cæsar rose in fate's despight ;
 Pompey's keen sword, that won the vanquish'd East,
 His younger rival's mightier arm confess'd :
 Yet short and transient was the flattering hour ;
 Cæsar himself soon felt frail Fortune's power :
 The East subdued, and Pompey now no more,
 Pharsalia's laurels home the victor bore.
 But Rome's stern patriot band, untaught to bear
 One, whose high soul with none in fame would share,
 E'en while the sun beheld the daring deed,
 From slavery's dreaded yoke their country freed,

Rush'd

Rush'd on the chief, that had the world subdued,
 And in his blood their vengeful blades embrued.
 Yet still unaw'd, though pierc'd with many a wound,
 The fainting hero calmly look'd around,
 And, conscious of his doom, with decent pride,
 Drew his fall'n robe his limbs expos'd to hide,
 And as he nobly liv'd, he greatly died.

}

CRÆSUS*.

Though on fam'd Cræsus fortune deign'd to pour
 Unusual streams from her exhaustless store,
 Yet could not these unruffled peace ensure,
 Nor e'en from perils dire their lord secure;
 Torn by rude force, and doom'd in raging fire
 With torture's keenest anguish to expire;
 When sudden, lo! loud peals the welkin rend,
 And in huge torrents bursting clouds descend,
 Whelm'd by the floods, the raging flames are drown'd,
 And the scap'd victim heaven's kind mercies own'd:

* The greatest part of this story is taken from the Rom. de la R. ver. 6847—6912. TYRWHITT, ver. 14645.

It is related of Polycrates of Samos, by Herodotus—Thalia.

BELOE'S Transf. v. ii. p. 147.

Yet not such perils might his rage restrain,
For war's dire conflicts soon he pants again :
Sav'd once by Heav'n, he dreams, with groundless joy,
That him no human foe may e'er destroy.

One night he dream'd, that, as suspended high
On a huge tree, whose branches touch'd the sky,
Great Jove himself became his menial slave,
And deign'd with heavenly streams his limbs to lave ;
This done, the God of day with studious care
Chaf'd his fair skin, and dried his dripping hair.
Awak'd, with added pride his bosom swells,
Then to his daughter pleas'd the tale he tells,
Bids the wise maid weigh well each flattering sign,
And quick his dream's mysterious sense divine.

With forrowing voice th' obedient maid replied,
" Would that the sad recital I might hide !
" But oh ! my fire ! in the wide branching tree
" My eyes, forewarn'd, the fatal gallows see ;
" Thy body thence suspended shall remain,
" Not wash'd by Jove, but drench'd with pouring rain ;
" And, when gay Phœbus shines with radiance clear,
" Dried by his beams thy limbs shall white appear."

Too well the prescient maid the truth declar'd,
And soon the king his fate expected shar'd.

Him

Him nought his throne, nor treasur'd heaps could save,
 Doom'd to dire death, and e'en denied a grave.
 Thus fickle Fortune oft assails the proud,
 And her face hides behind a watery cloud.

PEDRO OF SPAIN.

Sad is the task in words of woe to tell,
 By what dire fate unhappy Pedro fell;
 Pedro, the pride of Spain, with envy view'd
 E'en by a brother's eye, who long pursued
 With rancour's keenest arts his destin'd prey,
 And chas'd him from his native realms away.
 Pierc'd with deep wounds in many a well-fought field,
 Still scorn'd his great undaunted soul to yield:
 Yet when eventful war's dire terrors fail'd,
 The wiles of base deceit at length prevail'd;
 Him to his tent his foe perfidious drew,
 And with a brother's hand his hated rival slew.

PEDRO OF CYPRUS.

Thou too of Cyprus, whose immortal name,
 When * Alexandria fell, to growing fame

* Alexandria in Egypt was won, and immediately after abandoned in 1365, by Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus.—Walsingham mentions the taking of Alexandria (p. 180), and adds, *Interfuerunt autem huic captioni cum rege Cypriæ plures Anglici et Aquitanici*, referentes tam in Angliam quam in Aquitaniam

Through the wide world's remotest regions known,
 Thy bravest peers for matchless deeds outshone!
 Yet thine own subjects view'd with envious eye
 Those matchless deeds, that rais'd thy name so high;
 Impatient of thy worth, their base commands
 Thy life requir'd, e'en from a murderer's hands.

BARNABO VISCONTI*.

Nor yet to thee denied shall be the meed,
 By fame to valour's generous sons decreed,
 Milan's great boast, and Barnabo thy name!
 Whose deeds the woes of Lombardy proclaim.
 Yet might not these thy forfeit life secure,
 E'en thine own house could not thy fame endure;
 He, who to thee in strictest bonds was tied,
 By love's soft cement, as by blood allied,
 Made thy best days in mournful thralldom pine,
 Then bade thee, lost to hope, thy generous soul resign!

HUGH OF PISA.

What tongue but falters, if it strive to tell
 Th' unheard-of woes, that hapless Hugh befall?

*pannos aureos et holosericos, splendoresque gemmarum exoticos
 in testimonium tantæ victoriæ.* TYRWHITT, ver. 51, vol. iv.

* Duke of Milan, deposed by his nephew, and thrown into
 prison, where he died 1385. TYRWHITT, ver. 14709.

Not

Not far from Pifa's walls, of rugged mien,
Antique and high, a lonely tower was seen ;
In this, by faction's lawless force immur'd,
Great Hugh long time a captive's fate endur'd ;
And with him were his little children three,
The eldest scarcely five years was of age,
Alas ! alas ! how dire the cruelty !
To shut up birds so sweet in such a cage !

One night it chanc'd, that at th' expected hour,
When the harsh jailor to the lonely tower
Was wont his coarse and scanty meal to bring,
Sudden his ears with sounds unusual ring,
As if, rebellowing with tremendous roar,
Th' eternal gates had clos'd, to ope no more.

Deep on his soul impress'd, the awful thought
Drops of keen anguish to his eyelids brought ;
Yet nought he said : but the observant eye
Of watchful youth is quick each change to spy ;
His younger child beheld the trickling tears,
And, as unus'd his heart to boding fears,
And but to present ills his sense awake,
Thus with weak voice the trembling infant spake :

“ Whence are these tears, dear, best of fathers ! say,
“ Are they to weep our jailor's long delay ?

X 4

“ And

"And that no morsel thy fond heart can give

"Thy dear-lov'd babes, though starving, to relieve ?

"Oh ! if one bit, how small soe'er, remains,

"Give it t' assuage my hunger's dreadful pains."

Daily did thus the child his sire implore,

Till, worn with want, he could complain no more ;

And when he found his prayer was still denied,

"Farewel," he said, his father kiss'd, and died.

Pierc'd at the sight, unbounded rage possess'd
The frantic father's agonizing breast ;

With his own teeth, o'ercome with grief, he tore

His lean lank arms, distain'd with streams of gore.

His babes, unconscious of grief's maddening power,

Thought he for hunger did his arms devour,

And said, "Dear father, let our flesh assuage

"The direful torments of thy hunger's rage :

"Thou gav'st it first ; then why dost thou repine,

"Again t' accept a right so justly thine ?"

Thus spake they both their last ; for soon he view'd

Them too sink lifeless, by dire want subdued ;

Not long could nature bear such poignant grief,

And death soon brought the wretched sire relief.

Who

Who lifts more full to read this tale of woe,
Let him to Dante's deathless pages go*.

* A very fine picture exhibiting this subject is in the possession of the Duke of Dorset, at Knowle in Kent, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

PRO-

PROLOGUE

T O

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE.

"STAY, good Sir Monk," the gentle Knight replies ;

" What we've already heard may well suffice ;

" For few there are, but quickly would forego,

" For one light tale, the themes of tenderest woe.

" Keenly, I own, their grief my heart partakes,

" Whom fickle fortune's wavering smile forsakes ;

" Nor less I'm pleas'd, if haply one relate

" The rise of modest worth from low estate :

" Such are the tales that generous joy bestow,

" And teach man's heart its noblest powers to know."

" Yea, by St. Paul's great bell," our Host replies,

" Let us, good Monk, have no more tragedies ;

" Not that, as some, compos'd of melting stuff,

" My heart, thank Heaven, is stout and somewhat
tough ;

" And, but that rous'd by the ne'er-ceasing clang

" Of jingling bells, that from thy bridle hang,

" Long

" Long since bound fast in sleep's soft, senseless chain,
" Thy tales had all to me been told in vain.
" Though, when the matter well befits my mind,
" I ne'er a want of due attention find.
" Tell us of hunting's joys, and manly feats ;
" Such is the theme that best our liking meets !"
" Nay," said the Monk, " in sports I boast no skill,
" Let then my post some worthier brother fill."
To the Nun's Priest then quick our Host applied,
" And, sir," he said, " though on a jade you ride,
" That's lean, and restif, and not worth a groat,
" Let not that check your gay and lively thought ;
" Laugh while you can, nor distant evils fear,
" And let our hearts some merry story cheer."
" Pleas'd," he return'd, " your mandate I obey,
" And, trust me, laugh I will, whene'er I may."

THE

THE
NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE.

TIME's snowy honours sprinkled on her head,
Her peaceful life an aged widow led ;
A lofty grove, her humble cot behind,
Fenc'd off the rudeness of the western wind :
In front a limpid stream meand'ring flow'd,
And breath'd gay health around the neat abode.

Small were her means, and slender was her store,
Yet did her sober wish ne'er pine for more ;
For her each year increas'd three fruitful sows,
For her, with well-swoln teats, three ruddy cows ;
And, these besides, a favourite ewe she kept,
Which oft in winter in her chamber slept.
Pledges of early love, indulgent Heaven
Two blooming daughters to her hopes had given.
No costly dainties on her board were seen ;
Her fare was homely, but her table clean :
No wine she tasted, neither pale nor red,
With black and white alone her board was spread,
With bowls of milk, and loaves of good brown
bread.

}
Far

Far from her cot repletion's ills withdrew,
Her steady nerves nor gout nor palsy knew:
But though luxurious dainties were denied,
Yet patient industry each want supplied;
And Heaven's best boon, unbought with hoards of
wealth,

Crown'd every other blessing, jocund health.

A yard she had, inclos'd with pales about,
Drain'd, and defended by a ditch without,
In which a cock she kept, nam'd Chanticleer;
His pipe so shrill in crowing had no peer:
He, as if vers'd in problems of the schools,
Observ'd full nicely astronomic rules,
And, when th' horizon points fifteen below
The sun had reach'd, 'gan lustily to crow.

His comb, embattled like a castle-wall,
Red as fine coral, menac'd fate to all;
Bright was his bill, and black as ripen'd floe,
Azure his stately leg, and taper toe;
White were his nails, as lilies, to behold,
And his gay plumage was of burnish'd gold.

This gallant cock seven faithful hens attend,
And to his royal will obedient bend;

Though

Though sisters all, they all his favours share,
Like him in colour, as in shape and air :
But, these among, above the rest was seen
The lovely Partolete, his favourite queen :
Courteous she was, discreet, and debonnair ;
To Chanticleer she bore herself so fair,
That she alone above her peers confess'd
Reign'd the lov'd empress of her hero's breast.
Bless'd in his love, his bliss no fears alloy,
And every day shone bright with cloudless joy ;
His looks, his motions all, his bliss attest,
And his gay songs his lively joys express'd.

Oh ! what delight to hear the faithful pair
Pour their soft warblings through the vernal air !
For birds, not mute as now, in days of old
The powers of speech possess'd, as oft we're told,
And well their joys and fears could then rehearse
In the sweet numbers of responsive verse.

One night it chanc'd, when perch'd aloft he sat,
(His wives amidst, and next his best lov'd mate)
Sudden (dire omen) from his rattling throat
A harsh, discordant, wild, and faltering note
Forth issued frequent, while his labouring frame
Shook as convuls'd, and wak'd his favourite dame :

Alarm'd,

Alarm'd, askance her much-lov'd lord she ey'd,
And, more surpris'd, him sleeping still she spied;
"Whence is," she cried, "this harsh and direful
scream?"

"What vision strange disturbs thy restless dream?"

"Lend," he replied, "my love, a patient ear,

"And thou my dream's portentous tale shalt hear.

"Methought, as round our yard my walk I took,

"Mine eyes a beast of hideous figure struck;

"His frightful skin, of mix'd and varied hue,

"Yellow, and red, my fix'd attention drew;

"With black his tail was tipp'd, that swept the ground,

"With black his pendent ears were edg'd around,

"And his stern aspect, and his eyeballs red,

"Still sink my soul with undiminish'd dread."

"Oh! shame," she answer'd, "on thy coward heart,

"That dares to me such idle fears impart;

"Far nobler thoughts thy strengthen'd soul must prove,

"Or hence no longer may'st thou claim my love;

"For how shall him my warm affections prize,

"Who dares not fancy's airy foes despise?"

"Repletion's joys indulg'd all dreams supply,

"The vapoury fumes of superfluity.

"Thus

" Thus oft in man, when in his blood 'tis found,
" That fiery particles too much abound,
" Arrows, and flames, and forms of ghastly red,
" Fill, with strange visions, his bewilder'd head;
" Beasts of portentous shape before him fight,
" And frightful phantoms crowd his aching sight;
" Demons and imps his heated fancy views,
" He thinks each haggard sprite his steps pursues.
" Then fail not, love most dear! with watchful care
" Against such dreams terrific to prepare;
" These humours crude some med'cines brisk shall
 drain,

" And every latent ill in time restrain.

" Then, dearest Chanticleer, since well you know
" In your warm veins what ardent juices flow,
" Beware, lest haply they be too replete,
" When raging Sol ascends his burning seat;
" If thus they be, no earthly foresight knows
" What ills thy frame may seize, what direful woes;
" Fever's fierce fires thy shorten'd days may end,
" And immature to the dark grave may send;
" Or quartan's gradual waste thy strength consume,
" And nip thy blossoms in their earliest bloom.

" Thus

"Thus too old Cato's maxims sage advise,

"The idle phantasies of dreams despise."

"Madam," he said, "though Cato's honour'd
name

"Hath gain'd the summit of immortal fame,

"Yet are there those, who heights as great have
reach'd,

"And doctrines quite reverse have boldly preach'd:

"These from experience' stable test maintain,

"That dreams are neither fanciful nor vain;

"And clear the destinies of man foreshew,

"Heralds of joy, or harbingers of woe.

"* Once on a time, as ancient authors say,

"Two comrade youths pursued their destin'd way;

"A town they reach'd, but there no shelter found,

"Such crowds innumerable press'd each house around.

"So that to part at length they both agreed,

"To try how each alone might best succeed.

* Cicero (de Divin. l. i. c. 27.) relates this and the following story, but in a contrary order, and with so many other differences, that one might be led to suspect that he was here quoted at second hand, if it were not usual with Chaucer in these stories of familiar life to throw in a number of natural circumstances, not to be found in his original authors.

TYRWHITT, ver. 14990.

" One in a stall with beasts, on heaps of hay,
 " Worn with fatigue, was glad his limbs to lay;
 " The other (so capricious chance ordain'd)
 " In a neat house a decent lodging gain'd.
 " Soon sleep's soft bands his wearied eyelids close,
 " But short and broken was his wish'd repose;
 " Dreaming his comrade's voice he seems to hear,
 " The well-known accents strike his startled ear;
 " Haste, hither haste, he cries, thine aid to lend,
 " Or in an ox's stall thy murder'd friend,
 " Ere this short night be pass'd, his life shall end. }
 " Sudden he starts, but listening keen around,
 " Nor voice of friend, nor breath of life he found;
 " Again he sinks to rest, again he hears
 " The well-known voice, again he chides his fears;
 " Yet a third time the sounds his ears assail,
 " His friend appears, and tells his mournful tale.
 " Here, drench'd in gore, thy murder'd friend be-
 hold!
 " The hapless victim of corrupting gold.
 " Soon as the sun shall rise, with speed repair
 " To this vile town's west gate, thine eyes will there
 " A cart of dung descry, in which convey'd
 " From whence I slept my last my corse is laid.

" Scarce

" Scarce had the sun above the east arose,
 " When forth, his absent friend to seek, he goes :
 " But finds him not. Upris'n at break of day,
 " Your friend, the hostler says, pursued his way.
 " Now in his mind suspicious bodings grew,
 " Again his dream's dire horrors rose to view ;
 " Impatient to the western gate he hies,
 " The cart of dung there meets his wond'ring eyes :
 " Help, help ! he furious calls ; this cart contains
 " My murder'd comrade's maim'd and cold remains !
 " Rous'd by his cries, a crowd collects around,
 " And the vile load hurls instant to the ground,
 " In which, with gore distain'd, the breathless
 corse they found. }
 " (Oh, murder ! sin most dire ! in vain is tried
 " Each specious art thy deep foul guilt to hide,
 " In vain thy deeds of darkness shun the light,
 " Heaven's searching lamp will bring them all to light.)
 " Soon the just laws the murderers base pursue,
 " And doom to each the fate so justly due.
 " Here then, sweet Partlet, by the event 'tis found,
 " That dreams are sometimes built on stable ground ;
 " Nor this alone, but the same book records
 " Proof still more full—attend th' impressive words.

“ Two men, their eyes with foreign fights to please,
“ In friendly concert fix'd to cross the seas ;
“ Alert the port they reach, but th' adverse gale
“ Forbade that night the ready bark to fail ;
“ Next day the breeze, propitious to their prayer,
“ Bids for the morrow every hand prepare.
“ One of these friends, when now sleep's soothing
 power
“ Held her soft reign, at midnight's silent hour,
“ An unknown form beheld, whose firm command
“ Bade him his purpose quit, nor leave the land ;
“ Duly, he said, my well-weigh'd mandate keep,
“ Nor glut the fury of th' expecting deep !
“ The morn arriv'd, he wakes his sleeping friend,
“ And earnest bids him to his dream attend ;
“ Urges his wish their destin'd course to stay,
“ Nor hazard life's frail tenure for a day.
“ With scorn his bolder comrade mocks his fears,
“ And still unmov'd his vain remonstrance hears :
“ What from vain dreams, he said, can mortals
 know,
“ That they for them should e'er their plans forego ?
“ Sometimes disturb'd men dream of owls and apes,
“ Of wanton whimsies and of wondrous shapes,
“ Ideal

" Ideal forms, distemper'd fancy's train,
" The shadowy vapours of a feverish brain :
" But if thou dare not trust th' inviting gale,
" Spite of thy fears, myself alone will fail.
" This said, he went—but ere that half her course
" The bark had gain'd, a tempest's sudden force
" Whelm'd her ingulph'd, nor strength nor skill could
 save
" One hapless victim from th' unpitying wave.
" 'Twas in a dream, as legends old relate,
" To Kenelm Heav'n foretold his bloody fate ;
" His sapient nurse the portent dark divin'd,
" And arm'd with caution sage his tender mind.
" But the gay spirits of unheeding youth
" Heard unconvinc'd the voice of sober truth.
" His life his folly paid. Hence, Partlet, see
" The power of dreams, nor trust alone in me ;
" Let authors grave in various ages born
" The truth confirm, and check thy groundless scorn.
" Macrobius' pages first their force proclaim,
" And, these besides, a book of worthier name,
" E'en holy Writ proofs strong and clear affords,
" And Daniel's pow'rs, and Joseph's deeds records.

" Thus did a dream to Lydia's king foreshew
 " The last disgraceful scene, that clos'd his woe.
 " A dream, Andromache * ! first rous'd thy fears,
 " And bath'd thy cheeks with unavailing tears,
 " When firm of soul, though blind to fate, thy lord
 " Rush'd on the conquering Greeks' resistless sword.
 " But morn appears, and though thy charms inspire
 " Joy to my heart, and ever-new desire ;
 " Yet of thy laxatives, I pray, no more,
 " On nostrums of old wives I set no store ;
 " Blest in thy love, I every fear defy,
 " And, when with thee, believe no danger nigh."
 This said, he sprung all joyous to the ground,
 And, having there a grain of barley found,
 Clucking he call'd his wand'ring dames around.

Now had that vigorous month (in which began
 Creation's plastic power, and new form'd man

* We must not look for this dream of Andromache in Homer: the first author who relates it is the fictitious Dares, c. xxiv; and Chaucer very probably took it from him, or from Guido de Columnis, or perhaps from Benoit de Sainte More, whose Roman de Troye I believe to have been that history of Dares, which Guido professes to follow, and has indeed almost entirely translated. TYRWHITT, ver. 15147.

Sprang, heav'n-call'd, into life) now March had pass'd,
And, April gone, May's roseate bloom at last
Smil'd wide around, when swoln in all his pride,
His seven attendant queens their lord beside,
Gay Chanticleer look'd up, and eyed the sun,
That in the sign of Taurus now had run
Some twenty points or more : this well he knew,
Of art untaught, by pure instinctive view.

"Partlet," he says, "my best and sole delight !
"See ! with his beams how Sol in radiance bright
"Glads the gay world, and bids each bird to sing,
"And hail with varied note the new-born spring !
"Cheer'd by the scene my lifted heart o'erflows,
"And nought but joy unmix'd, enraptur'd knows."

But ah ! how short's the term of transient joy !
Woe quick succeeds, its sad but sure alloy.
Attend the mournful tale, which I engage
Is true as in the captivating page
Of Lancelot du Lake, whose deeds of fire
Heroic ardour in each heart inspire,
But dames of tender souls above all admire. }
For a vile fox, that long had shelter found
In the tall grove, that screen'd the yard around,

Had that sad night the faithless fence o'erleap'd,
And in a bed of greens in ambush crept.
Thus murderers base their bloody plots pursue,
And ever sink with conscious shame from view.

O treachery ! sin deform'd, thy hateful arts
Tinge with malignant gall the gentlest hearts !
Nature with bounteous hand to all assign'd
Pity's soft balm, the milk of human kind ;
The precious boon e'en Judas' self possess'd,
Till falsehood's wiles debas'd his harden'd breast.
Sinon's false heart with kindness once had glow'd,
And tender tears had from his eyelids flow'd :
But, urg'd by thee, he toil'd with barbarous joy,
Till, from her base o'erturn'd, he view'd imperial
Troy.

That morn undeck'd, as erst, with streams of gold,
Red rose the sun, and dire events foretold.
Ah ! what avail'd the clear prophetic dream,
Thy Partlet's horrors at thy midnight scream ?
Fate gives the word, the destin'd hour is come,
And thou, gay Chanticleer, must meet thy doom.

Let doctors grave the question dark explain,
How God's decrees the powers of man restrain ;

These

These lighter rhimes ill suits such deep debate ;
My tale's of a gay Cock, who, blind to fate,
Scorn'd the sage counsels of his wiser mate.

}

But, truth to say, mankind full oft have found
A wife's advice but groundless, and unsound.

This was the cause that our first parents drove
From blissful Eden's ever-smiling grove—

But stay, rash pen, thy course, nor here expound
More on a theme so nice, which may be found
In many a page set forth by wits more bold,
Whose works of female wiles have largely told.

Reckless of ill, now gallant Chanticleer
Crow'd as he march'd erect with merry cheer,
When, sudden pierc'd with keen and wild surprise,
On the dire fox he glanc'd his wand'ring eyes :
Quick through his frame the shock electric thrill'd,
And each warm drop around his heart was chill'd ;
Check'd instant was his song, but from his throat
Short and abrupt heav'd many a broken note ;
And where's the man so bold, that's dead to fear,
When he beholds his mortal foe so near?

To fly he wish'd, but flattery's blinding art
Nature's just fears o'ercame, and gain'd his heart ;

Him,

Him, dubious yet, the artful fox address'd,
And with soft words the easy dupe cares'd.
" Why does my friend from one to fly prepare,
" Whose sole ambition is his love to share ?
" Think not that here as a base spy I come ;
" Pleasure alone has led me thus from home ;
" And, truth if tell I must, my longing ear
" Pines still unblest, till thy sweet voice I hear.
" O songster ! thou so rare, that few can tell
" Whether thou most in voice or skill excel !
" Thy fire full well I knew, and the fair dames
" Thy gentle mother, who so often came
" In happy days, now past, my cot to see :
" How blest were I, to boast the like of thee !
" Gods ! how I us'd with raptur'd joy to run
" Instant as e'er his matin gay begun !
" How oft, e'en now, I think his voice I hear !
" And list fix'd breathless with delighted ear ;
" And sure but from thyself ne'er mortal heard
" So sweet a carol from so blith a bird.
" Then, when he will'd to reach his shrillest note,
" How wink'd his eyes, how stretch'd his taper throat !
" That far the rest above the well-known sound
" Pierc'd ev'ry ear the wide-spread hamlet round.

" Then

"Then grant, dear friend, my prayer without delay,
"And the vast powers of thy sweet voice display."

Pleas'd with his speech, his flapping wings attest
The rising joys, that flutter'd in his breast;
And say, ye great ones, have not oft ye found
Designing flatterers in your courts abound?
Yet, though ye know them, still ye lend your ear,
And, deaf to honest truth, their pois'nous tales ye
hear.

Now 'gan the cock, stretch'd on his toes, to rise,
And, as he crow'd, clos'd fast his piercing eyes:
Unguarded then the villain seiz'd his prey,
And bleeding bore him to the woods away.

Ah, stubborn destiny! from whose decree
Fatal and fix'd nor men nor gods are free.

Oh! hapless Chanticleer, lamented bird,
Oh! had the counsels of thy wife been heard!
On that dire day too the sad deed befel,
Sacred to her thou lov'dst, sweet bird, so well!
To Venus, pleasure's queen, the lovely power,
Who of thy life rul'd each luxurious hour!

Oh! were I blest'd with the sweet plaintive art,
Which wrung with pity's pangs each bleeding heart,
When

When * *Geofrey* sung, and he, fair England's pride,
 (On Friday too) great *Cœur de Lion* died;
 Then, vile dishonour'd day! thy foul disgrace
 Not e'er returning ages should efface;
 But earth's remotest verge in tears relate
 The gallant Chanticleer's disastrous fate.

Not with such cries did Simois' shores resound,
 When Ilion's towers sunk prostrate to the ground;

* *Geofrey*.—He alludes to a passage in the *Nova Poetria* of *Geofrey de Vinfauf*, published not long after the death of Richard I. In this work the author has not only given instructions for composing in the different styles of poetry, but also examples. His specimen of the plaintive kind of composition begins thus:

Neustria, sub clypeo regis defensa Richardi,
 Indefensa modo, gestu testare dolorem.
 Exundent oculi lachrymas; exterminet ora
 Pallor; connodet digitos tortura; cruentet
 Interiora dolor & verberet æthera clamor:
 Tota peris ex morte sua. Mors non fuit ejus,
 Sed tua; non una, sed publica mortis origo.
 O! Veneris lachrymosa dies! O! fydus amarum!
 Illa dies tua nox fuit, et Venus illa venenum.
 Illa dedit vulnus, &c.

These lines are sufficient to shew the object and the propriety of Chaucer's ridicule. The whole poem is printed in *Leyser's Hist. Po. Med. Ævi*, p. 862—978.

TYRWHITT, ver. 15353.

Not

Not so the Trojan dames their lord deplor'd,
When Priam fell, by Pyrrhus' vengeful sword,
As did the hens, when, pierc'd with poignant grief,
Torn from their fight they view'd their captur'd chief.
But who shall tell what direr woes possess'd
The tender Partlet's agonizing breast?
Such felt great Asdrubal's immortal dame,
Ere that she leap'd indignant on the flame,
Which, when proud Rome o'erthrew her rival foe,
Wrapp'd hapless Carthage in one waste of woe.
Rous'd by the noise, almost of sense bereft,
Her wheel unheeded now the widow left,
Forth from within her nimbler daughters flew,
When the dire cause of uproar soon they view;
But, ah! too late; the thief steals fast away,
And on his back bears home his hopeless prey.
Yet loud they whoop'd, and after him they ran,
And with huge staves, and panting, many a man;
The dogs, Bounce, Smut, and Hector, join'd the
band,
And Malkin, all unpinn'd, with distaff in her hand.
The cow and calf ran too, the very hogs,
So scared by the barking of the dogs,

And

And by the shouting of the rabble crew,
 Ran, as their hearts they would have burst in two.
 The geese for fear flew screaming o'er the trees,
 Out of the hive came the whole swarm of bees;
 So hideous was the din, that not Jack Straw,
 Nor his wild rout, in despite of all law,
 Made such dire uproar, nor shouts half so shrill,
 As those who ran the caitif fox to kill:
 Horns of all shapes, each instrument of noise,
 Of bone, or brass, the boist'rous sport of boys,
 Swell'd the harsh peal, that made each heart to quake,
 And forc'd high Heav'n's wide-echoing arch to shake.
 But oft her wheel capricious Fortune shifts,
 And oft to bliss unhop'd the wretch she lifts.
 The cock borne captive by his hungry foe,
 Doom'd, as he thought, to sure and hopeless woe,
 Him thus address'd—"A gallant fox were I,
 "Me ne'er, unheard, should such rude shouts defy:
 "This I would tell them all, the cock is mine,
 "Nor will I e'er my lawful prey resign."

Pleas'd with the bold suggestion, round he turns,
 And while his heart with conscious prowess burns,
 His mouth he opes to speak, when straight in view
 High on a tree the cock in rapture flew.

The

The fox, when now he found his prey was lost,
And that superior craft his wiles had crost,
"Sir Cock," he says, "I fear you thought me rude,
That I unask'd should in your yard intrude.

"But, if you'll deign come down, I'll soon explain,

"That all your fears of me were weak and vain."

"Pardon, sweet Fox, if I your prayer refuse ;

"The neck, once 'scap'd, may well beware the noose.

"What fool were I, if twice your wiles deceive,

"And if again your flatteries I believe !

"Henceforth smooth words experienc'd I'll despise,

"Nor e'er again will sing, and wink my eyes :

"For ah ! how senseless, weak, and fond is he,

"Who idly winks his eyes, when he should see !"

"Nor trust me," quoth the fox, "is he less wrong,

"Who knows not, when 'tis time to hold his tongue."

Taught by this fable, with attention view,

What fatal ills from flattery ensue ;

A cock and fox are subjects of the tale,

But the same faults alike in men prevail ;

'Tis for their use the moral page is penn'd,

And blest are they, who first their faults amend.

"Thanks,"

"Thanks," said the Host, "good priest, at all our hands,

"Thy gay and pointed tale of right demands.

"Ah! what a pity 'tis that powers like thine

"Should useles lie, like diamonds in a mine!

"That thou should'st slight, restrain'd by senseless vows,

"That first great law, to which all nature bows!

"For well, my friend, by various signs 'tis shewn,

"That love's fair queen hath mark'd thee for her own.

"Thy gifts are matchless, and, were such thy will,

"None should so well her soft behests fulfil;

"E'en thine own cock to thee in feats should yield,

"And, when with thee compar'd, should quit the field;

"Not seven hens only should thy virtues prove,

"But seven, and seven twice told should court thy love.

"Behold what limbs! how brawny! vast of size!

"And, like a sparrowhawk's, dart thy piercing eyes!

"Nor e'er from home vermilion need'st thou seek,

"Such unbought hues bedeck thy rosy cheek.

"But for thy tale our thanks once more receive,

"And now some other shall thy post relieve."

THE

THE

SECOND NUN'S TALE.

TO 'scape the bonds insidious Sloth prepares,
 To rouse th' awaken'd soul to worthier cares,
 To shun the paths to hateful vice that lead,
 And active virtue's nobler heights to tread ;
 To this man's great and godlike powers invite,
 And self-approving joys such toils requite.

When the foul fiend hath mark'd his destin'd prey,
 And once hath seen him yielding to his sway,
 Instant his thousand cords around he spreads,
 And o'er his head Lethean dews he sheds ;
 Till tame, and torpid, his degenerate soul,
 Dead to fair fame, and virtue's sweet controul,
 And each keen sense extinct, kind nature gave,
 He sinks, a helpless, heartless, hopeless slave.

And should grim death awhile his prayers appease,
 And should he still delay his prey to seize,
 How poor, how joyless is the fleeting hour
 Won from the tyrant's stern resistless power,

If the fair season of the short reprieve
No fruits of lovely virtue e'er relieve !
And ah ! how mean, how brutal are the joys,
When the dead sense the qualm of surfeit cloy,
And the short space allow'd by pitying Heaven,
Which soft indulgence spares, to sloth is given !
To bid frail youth of ills like these beware,
A task well worth the moral muse's care,
Here she hath fair transcrib'd th' instructive page,
That holds a pattern rare to every age,
And gives divine Cecilia's deathless name,
To shine unrival'd in the rolls of fame.
Come, thou fair form ! divine, mysterious maid !
And lend, O ! lend, benign thy puissant aid,
Lest I in words unmeet and mean relate
Thy honour'd vot'ry's sad, disastrous fate !
O thou ! whose soul so spotless, chaste, and pure,
Could e'en thy Maker's piercing search endure !
Thou ! from whose loins high Heaven's Almighty
King
Ordain'd his own eternal son to spring ;
He, whom both heaven, and earth, and seas proclaim,
And (so the Eternal will'd) at whose high name
Each knee should lowly bow, creation's Lord,
By saints and seraphs worship'd and ador'd ;

Full

Full though of every power and grace divine,
Yet did his glories in thy womb enshrine,
And, to avert lost man's eternal doom,
Deign'd e'en his nature frail himself assume.
O thou ! by God's approving voice decreed
The blest assistant in the mighty deed !
Thou in whose soul each heavenly grace combines,
In whom o'er all distinguish'd mercy shines ;
Who not content thy healing aid to lend,
When misery's cries implore a pitying friend,
Dost oft unask'd delight her wounds to bind,
And bidd'st soft comfort 'suage her tortur'd mind !
Oh ! on thy vot'ry, though the least and last,
Deign with benignant smile thine eye to cast ;
Think on the faith of her, who erst implor'd
Crumbs from the table of her heavenly Lord,
Such as e'en dogs were wont ; and, oh ! inspire
Me, though unworthy, with thy chastening fire ;
Quick on my soul sublim'd thy grace impart !
Purge each impure affection from my heart !
That not one speck of earthly dross remain,
My just recital's spotless truth to stain !

In Rome the maid was born, of noble blood,
And Christ's pure love her mind betimes imbued ;

To him each day her ardent vows she paid,
And earnest begg'd to live a spotless maid :
Meantime, obedient to her sire's command,
To a fond youth she duteous gives her hand ;
And while in honour of the spousal rite
Soft music fills each heart with sweet delight,
Trembling to Heaven her tearful eyes ascend ;
And while her knees in warm devotion bend,
Once more she dares her Saviour's grace implore,
To grant her prayer, preferr'd so oft before.

Now, with her spouse retir'd, her troubled breast
Pour'd forth its load, and him she thus address'd :
“ O ! husband best belov'd ! O ! virtuous youth !
“ If, as I deem, the voice of honour'd truth
“ Is sacred to thy soul, thy wond'ring ear
“ With mute attention, what I tell, shall hear.
“ Know then, an angel on my steps attends,
“ And from each danger sure protection lends :
“ But my chaste vow's fix'd purpose to maintain,
“ To guard me safe from dire defilement's stain ;
“ This is his care ; and thus hath Heaven decreed,
“ That the bold man, who atchieves the hated deed,
“ And dares my virgin innocence despoil,
“ On him shall vengeanceu nappeas'd recoil.

“ If

"If such thy wish, the impious wish restrain,
 "And safe from death and pure from guilt remain."

Aw'd by her words, and check'd by chastening fear,
 He first demands the angel to appear,
 And on these terms he plights his sacred word,
 That to her wish his will shall next accord.

"Youth lov'd most dear," the raptur'd maid replies,

"Since thus thou say'st, soon shall thy gladden'd eyes

"The form divine behold : but here I claim,

"That thou shalt then revere the honour'd name

"Of Christ our Lord, and on his words believe,

"And thou shalt baptism's holy rite receive.

"Thee from the walls the Appian way shall lead,

"And, ere thy footsteps three short miles proceed,

"Thine eyes shall there descry a homely cot,

"Where souls devout reside, though mean their lot.

"Tell them, Cecilia bade thee haste from Rome,

"And to the holy faint, old Urban, come :

"Him when thou seest, thy journey's cause unfold, }

"And, when absolv'd from sin, as here I've told, }

"Thy wond'ring eyes the angel shall behold."

Now to the place prescrib'd Valerian came,
 And, as instructed by his lovely dame,

Urban among the lonely tombs he found,
Musing with eyes fix'd stedfast on the ground :
His message told, enraptur'd to the skies,
The hoary faint uplifts his feeble eyes ;
Tears of pure joy his holy zeal attest,
And paint the warm emotions in his breast.
" O Jesu !" then he cries, " how blest I see
" The seed of grace expand, that's sown by thee !
" Of thee divine Cecilia, gracious Lord,
" The boon of spotless chastity implor'd ;
" Yet not confin'd to her pure breast alone,
" It warms her husband's bosom, as her own ;
" Spite of her charms, no less than youthful blood,
" See nature's strong desires by faith subdued !"
Scarce had he spoke, when fair before their sight
An aged man appear'd in vesture bright.
The youth amaz'd, and wond'ring to behold
Rais'd in his hand a book with words of gold,
Down lifeless sinks : but soon dispell'd his fears,
The man these words aloud to read he hears :
" One Lord, one Faith, one Power, whom God we
 call,
" Father of life and light, supreme o'er all."

This

This dost thou firm believe? the man demands :
The youth consent express'd with uplift hands.
This done, the vision fled ; with decent care
Now Urban bids for baptism's rite prepare,
And to Valerian grants the mystic sign,
The sacred symbol of each grace divine.

Now, home return'd, devout with bended knees
(An angel near her) his fair spouse he sees ;
The heavenly form in either hand display'd
A wreath, of lilies fair and roses made ;
Then thus he says ; " Endued with powers divine,
" Be this fair chaplet, chaste Cecilia, thine ;
" To thee, thrice blest Valerian, this is sent,
" And, with this charge, I the rich gifts present.
" Spotless and pure your holy vows maintain,
" And these sweet flowers their fragrance shall retain :
" Pluck'd from the bower of Paradise they came,
" Their bloom through endless ages still the same ;
" Yet such the sacred pledge, no unchaste eye
" May e'er their matchless beauties hope to spy.
" And thou, Valerian ! since thy docile mind
" So soon to counsel's sober voice inclin'd,
" Ask what thou wilt"—To whom he quick replied,
" O ! be not then this earnest boon denied !

"A brother's tender love divides my care,

"And each soft int'rest of his soul I share.

"Deign then to him the heavenly truth impart,

"And Christ's pure love shall warm his grateful heart."

"Well," then the angel said, "doth Heaven approve

"Thy pure requital of fraternal love,

"And to you both its kind behests accord,

"The deathless palm, the martyr's high reward."

These words he spoke, when now Tiburtius comes,
And, instant ravish'd with the sweet perfumes,

"Whence," he exclaims, with strange and warm
surprise,

"Whence do these fragrant wondrous scents arise?

"Not richer odours could my sense relieve,

"Should showers of roses my full hands receive;

"Soft o'er my raptur'd soul new-wak'd I feel

"Delights ne'er felt before, so sweetly steal."

"Brother," Valerian says, "two chaplets fair,

"Heaven's gifts to us, perfume the fragrant air;

"And as my earnest prayer has thus prevail'd,

"That with their sweets thy smell should be regal'd,

"So

"So if in Christ's pure word thou wilt believe,
"Soon shall thy ravish'd sight their charms perceive."

"Brother," Tiburtius said, "most lov'd, most
dear !

"Is it a dream or truth that thus I hear?"

"Already now too long," the youth replied,

"Have dreams of darkness strove the truth to hide :

"But from this house no longer 'tis conceal'd,

"And its clear light to us is now reveal'd."

"Whence has this been?" his faltering voice de-
mands.

"Heaven sent the gift, and by an angel's hands ;

"One whom," Valerian adds, "thyself shalt see,

"When thy purg'd soul shall once from sin be free :

"But vile idolatry thou first must leave,

"Ere thou canst truth's enlightening beams receive."

Then to his opening reason's clearer view

Cecilia shews, how groundless and untrue

Is the vain hope, to which fond man's so prone;

To trust in idols, gods of wood or stone ;

To be of deaf and senseless stocks afraid,

The grim and ghastly forms himself hath made.

"I feel thy suasive words," Tiburtius cries,

"And henceforth every idol I despise."

Warm'd

Warm'd with pure joy, to her enraptur'd breast
The happy convert chaste Cecilia press'd;
"Brother indeed," she says, "by grace allied!
"Firm to thy love behold thy sister tied!
"Forth instant go, in steady faith secure,
"And when thou'rt purg'd by baptism's waters pure,
"Then shall the angel thy glad eyes behold,
"Of whose blest deeds Valerian erst hath told.
"But duly first to what I teach attend—
"Whene'er this short and fleeting life shall end,
"A life of hopes sublimer shall begin,
"Unvex'd with care, and undefil'd by sin:
"This truth hath God's eternal Son display'd,
"He, by whose wondrous power the worlds were
made."

Then to his listening ears did she explain
Whate'er the sacred books of life contain,
God's pitying grace, redemption's mighty plan,
And Christ's unbounded love to hopeless man.

This done, to holy Urban he repairs,
Who, ere the rite of baptism, well prepares,
By culture's strengthening aid, the docile youth
T' imbibe the graces of eternal truth.

Now

Now day by day delighted Urban sees
His opening mind expand by just degrees,
Sees with what joy, when th' angel blest appears,
Divine instruction from his lips he hears.

But now the time is come, that's doom'd to prove
How firm in Christ his faith, how pure his love.
Him and Valerian soon stern mandates call
Before the image of great Jove to fall;
Worship or die, the harsh decrees enjoin.
Rather than this, death's keenest pangs be mine,
They both unmov'd exclaim; and now they heard
The judge pronounce the dread and dire award.
But their pure zeal so mov'd the soften'd mind
Of the stern guards, to whom they were consign'd,
That pitying first, they soon with patient ear
Yielded the doctrines of their faith to hear;
Renounc'd at length their sins, with heartfelt shame,
And firm believ'd in Jesus' holy name.
Meantime Cecilia to her friends repairs,
And with them joins devout in humble prayers:
Priests too she brings, who, 'mid the gloom of night,
Admit the convert guards to baptism's rite.

The morn arriv'd, with warm and earnest care
Cecilia bids them for their task prepare,

Bids

Bids them from earth their brighter hopes remove,
And fix them on their sure rewards above.

"Adieu," she cries—The guards, when this she said,
Their prisoners forth to Jove's high altar led;
There having each refus'd his vows to pay,
To death their necks they yield without delay.

The tender Maximus, to whose command
The Prefect had consign'd th' attendant band,
Saw through mid air their parting souls ascend,
And crowds of angels on their flight attend:
This he to all with dauntless tongue declar'd,
And for his zeal the law's dire vengeance shar'd.
On him Cecilia burial's rites conferr'd,
And near the martyr brothers him interr'd.

Her pious cares awake the Prefect's rage,
And means, her zeal to check, his thoughts engage;
The holy maid he bids before him stand,
And to his gods, with undissembling hand,
Accustom'd incense throw—"And dread," he cries,
"The doom that waits the wretch, that this denies."
Then long and various questions he propounds,
Asks of her novel faith's fallacious grounds.
"Know'st thou my power?" he says. With firm reply,
"All thou canst do," she answers, "I defy;

"Man's

"Man's puny power is feeble and confin'd,
"An unsubstantial bladder swoln with wind;
"A needle's point betrays the empty boast,
"Pierce but the surface, and in air 'tis lost."
"But well thou know'st, great Cæsar's laws proclaim

"Avow'd abhorrence to the Christian name."

"Tyrants, I know, to truth's fair dictates blind,
"In purest innocence oft guilt will find;
"Thus peaceful Christians now your fears engage,
"And war unjust against our faith ye wage:
"But war, and threats, and death's dire pangs are
vain,

"For firm that faith, I hold, I will maintain."

Stung with her taunts, fresh anger fires his eye,
"Cast instant incense," fierce he speaks, "or die!"
Calmly his rage she answers with a smile,
"Think not, such threats can e'er my faith beguile!"
"O wretch," he says, "restrain'd thine insults keep,
"And let reluctant vengeance peaceful sleep:
"Ready, thou know'st, the ministers of fate,
"Marshall'd in dread array, my mandates wait.
"Cease then, unwise, their vengeance to deride,
"Nor fall th' unpitied victim of thy pride!"

"Pride,"

"Pride," she replies, "our humble laws disdain ;

"But the firm words of honest truth are plain.

"What if by thee to torturing death decreed,

"Before the altars of thy gods I bleed !

"There ends thy power ; above thy stern controul

"Are the pure feelings of th' immortal soul ;

"Unhurt th' impassive spirit wings her way

"To the bright regions of eternal day."

"Peace, peace, fond wretch," he cries, "revile
no more

"The honour'd gods, the sons of Rome adore!"

"O ! would kind Heaven, with waken'd warmth,
she cries,

"Tear the thick film from thy benighted eyes !

"Then thou at length the simplest truths might'st
learn,

"And see, what eyes of infants can discern,

"That the huge form to which such thousands bend,

"To which a blinded nation's vows ascend,

"Ere the sharp axe transform'd the shapeless wood,

"A lofty oak in yon tall forest stood.

"Should the hard block, which now a God they call,

"On the crush'd hand of some sad vet'ry fall,

"See

"See though he will not, feel he might though blind,
"And mere substantial stone his God would find."

No longer could his rage her taunts endure,

"Here, guards," he cries, "the impious wretch secure !

"'Neath a huge cauldron heap hot coals of fire,

"And in the boiling bath let her expire !"

Prompt his imperious mandates they obey,

And (strange to tell) for a long night and day

She all unhurt amid the flames remain'd,

And ne'er e'en once of torturing heat complain'd.

This but increas'd the baffled Prefect's spite,

And off her head he bids his slaves to finite.

Obedient to his word her neck she bends,

And thrice with fruitless stroke the axe descends ;

Unsever'd it remains—to end her woe,

The law forbids again to aim the blow.

Three days the pangs of torture she surviv'd,

Ere death, affliction's friend, at length arriv'd ;

Daily, while Heaven her suffering life prolong'd,

To their lov'd saint the weeping Christians throng'd ;

And as around her, drown'd in grief, they stood,

And with their kerchiefs staunch'd the flowing blood,

Still,

Still, though her soul pain's keenest anguish wrung,
Shè pour'd divine instruction from her tongue.

Releas'd, her patient sufferings to requite,
Urban perform'd interment's solemn rite ;
Her house, her dying gift, a church became,
And still preserv'd Cecilia's honour'd name ;
And daily there by kneeling crowds are paid
Unfeign'd devotions to the martyr'd maid.

PROLOGUE

T O

THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S TALE.

CECILIA's tale now clos'd, to Boughton town,
 Scarce half a mile, the cavalcade had gone,
 When them a man o'ertook, in fable clad,
 Who 'neath a rusty coat a surplice had :
 Three miles at least full speed he must have rode,
 So sweat his panting steed beneath his load ;
 His lackey's leaner jade, still more bedew'd,
 Could not have further e'en one step pursued :
 What had its colour been no eye descried,
 Plaister'd with foam, 'twas like a leopard pied,
 Such spots of various hues emboss'd its hide. }
 A lank portmanteau, charg'd with slender store,
 On his sharp croupe's unfurnish'd ridge he bore.
 What could the master be, I wond'ring stood,
 When by his cloak, firm fasten'd to his hood,
 And by his black attire, 'twas clear to see,
 That our new friend some canon grave must be.

Dangling behind his sorry beaver hung,
Which by a lace around his neck was flung;
An old and dingy kerchief in its stead
Receiv'd the copious dew-drops from his head,
Which smoak'd with reeking steam, though closely
shorn,

Like a new dunghill in a winter's morn.

"Gentles," he said, "Heaven save you all, I cry;
"I've push'd full hard to bear you company."

"Ay," said his groom, "myself at peep of day
"Saw you, great sirs, set forward on your way,
"And instant to take horse my lord advis'd,
"For well, I knew, good fellowship he priz'd."

"Friend," said our Host, "thy master, I'll en-
gage,

"Is deep in learned lore, discreet, and sage.

"But is his mind with lighter fancies stor'd?

"Can he, dost think, some pleasant tale afford?"

"Ay, can he well—and could'st thou, friend, like me,

"Daily the proofs of his vast talents see,

"His potent deeds thy senses would amaze,

"And thou would'st on him rapt in wonder gaze.

"Full well, though now he mean and homely seem,

"Would'st thou, when tried, his friendly aid esteem."

"Is

"Is he a clerk?" "A clerk!—ay, far more great.

"Come near, and of him I will more relate.

"Such power he has (but this too should be said,

"That he ne'er wonders works without my aid)

"That all this chalky ground, on which we ride,

"And all to our journey's destin'd end beside,

"Such were his will (but keep what here I've told)

"He could upturn, and pave with shining gold."

"Bless me!" our Host replies, "if this be so,

"Why does thy lord in such vile tatters go?

"For through his clothes his very skin is spied,

"Which, if he gold could find, he sure would hide."

"Friend," said the lackey, "if I truth confess,

"I needs must say, myself have thought no less;

"But 'tis a fact not rare, that deepest wits

"Are least attentive to what all befits;

"And those absorb'd in studies most abstruse,

"Are oft too wise to practise things of use."

"My queries," said our Host, "I pray forgive,

"And farther tell me, how and where you live."

Pausing awhile, he smil'd, and thus replied:

"From thee, my pleasant friend, I nought will hide.

"Where we have liv'd, in truth, 'tis hard to say,

"For we our holes have shifted every day;

A a 2

"Chief

“ Chief in the suburbs of some crowded town,
“ ’Mong rogues, whose deeds of darkness, like our
own,
“ Hate the broad glare of penetrating light,
“ And court the shelter of all-conscious night.”
Our Host then, staring full with quaint grimace,
“ But wherefore so discolour’d is thy face ?”
With earnest tone exclaims. “ My face,” he cried,
“ May well with these unseemly spots be dyed ;
“ And so would thine, my merry friend, I trow,
“ Didst thou all night, like me, hot cinders blow.
“ My lot ’s to pore incessant o’er the fire,
“ Though oft we miss the fruits, we most desire ;
“ Now ’tis too cold, and now as much too hot,
“ And, after all our toils, still nought is got ;
“ For science coy we find, and hard to woo,
“ Still far she flies, the faster we pursue,
“ And, unless soon o’erta’en, all hopes are past,
“ And our sad boon will be to starve at last.”

Now did the canon by degrees draw near,
Intent the substance of their talk to hear :
For this great Cato’s maxims sage decide,
Guilt and suspicion ever near reside.

“ Rascal !”

"Rascal!" he cries, "so loud to prate desist,
 "Or thou shalt feel the vengeance of my fist."
 "Ne'er mind his threats," our jolly Host replied,
 "But with thy tale proceed, as on we ride."
 Embolden'd now, "I will," the lackey said;
 —Of dire detection now himself afraid,
 The canon turns his horse without delay,
 And back with quicken'd pace directs his way.
 The groom, when now he saw his master gone,
 Smil'd, as well pleas'd, and spoke with firmer tone:
 "O first, O prince of sharpers! there thou goest!
 "Too long, alas! I've known thee to my cost!
 "May Heaven's choice curses on thy steps attend!
 "My long and painful service here shall end.
 "And now, my friends," he says, "you all shall
 hear
 "What I've as yet but whisper'd in one ear;
 "Fully the knavish arts I will unfold,
 "Of the dark mystery of making gold."

THE

CANON'S YEOMAN'S TALE.

SEVEN years are gone and pass'd, since with this
man

My hard and thriftless service first began ;
Then oft he promis'd, shortly to impart
The gainful secrets of his wondrous art :
But all that in seven years to me is known,
Is that, as each advanc'd, I've poorer grown.
Ere him I serv'd, I liv'd content and gay,
And was on Sundays clad in neat array ;
Not worn to skin and bone, I then was sleek,
And health and vigour bloom'd upon my cheek :
Now pale and sickly is my shrivel'd skin,
And as I'm wan without, I'm sad within ;
Blear'd with the scalding fumes is either eye,
Nor one soft solace of my griefs I spy ;
And still to make my sad misfortunes worse,
I feel the added weight of debt's dire curse :
My former dreams, too bright to be withstood,
Urg'd me to borrow cash, where'er I could ;

This

This marks with growing gloom each bitter day,
For how can e'er I hope my debts to pay?
Warn'd then by me, henceforth of frauds beware,
Nor trust in Alchemy's deceitful snare!
For many are they, who once themselves deceiv'd,
Wish by their friends the fraud to be believ'd,
And, lest their folly meet its well-earn'd shame,
Strive to decoy their neighbours to the same.
But if ye now will lend a patient ear,
Ye the whole process of the craft shall hear.

When for our mighty work we now prepare,
Perch'd on each brow severe sits cloudy care;
First our mysterious books are wide display'd,
And each fit utensil in order laid;
Then with my breath, sad task! I blow the fire,
Till choak'd with smoke my lungs can scarce respire.
First we of silver due proportions take,
Then we the bones of beasts or burn, or bake;
With these steel dust and orpiment combine,
And mix the mass, and grind to powder fine;
Then in an earthen pot 'tis plac'd with care,
On which a lamp of glass excludes the air.
But salt and pungent pepper, be it known,
Must in the empty vessel first be thrown.

How shall I paint the toils, that next ensue ?
How shall I tell, how oft the coals I blew,
Ere the exact and proper heat prevail'd,
For want of which so oft our labours fail'd ?

Fain would I tell you ; but my shallow brain
Cannot the names of half the things retain,
Which the completion of our work demands,
Nor half the painful labours of our hands ;
Clay, lime unslak'd, and mercury call'd crude,
Moonwort, valerian, with strong powers endued ;
Brimstone, and borax, and bol armenic,
Salt petre, vitriol, and arsenic ;
Alum, and yeast, and nature's very dregs,
Urine, and dung, old rags, and whites of eggs ;
Chalk, ashes, oil, why should I name them all ?
Glas, sal ammoniac, and bullock's gall.

Fitly these various substances to use,
The proper vessels from our store we choose ;
These are of copper, iron, wood, and brass,
Some made of earth and clay, and some of glass :
Some straight, some curv'd, some long, and others
short,
Alembic, cucurbite, crosselette, retort ;

With

With these what works we do, would tire your ear,
 Should you but half our operations hear :
 Now we amalgamate, sublime, refine,
 And now precipitate, cement, calcine.

But I should this, good sirs, before have told,
 That the prime movers, spirits, are fourfold ;
 Quicksilver first, and orpiment the second,
 Ammoniac next, and last is brimstone reckon'd.

Rang'd in seven classes bodies we divide,
 To the seven planetary orbs allied.
 Gold is the glowing sun's imperial care ;
 Silver the moon's, less precious, but more fair ;
 The hardy warrior Mars loves iron strong,
 To Mercury doth quicksilver belong ;
 Saturn's slow tedious round is well pourtray'd
 By the dull properties of heavy lead ;
 Tin's lighter veins attract ethereal Jove,
 And copper's ruddy beams the Queen of love.

But, trust me, he, whom these pursuits allure,
 Hastes to dire want with footstep fast and sure ;
 No purse, how full soe'er, can long suffice ;
 For fresh defeats still call for fresh supplies ;
 Till in the vortex of th' abyss profound
 (Each hope at length extinct) all, all is drown'd.

Nor

Nor boots it, if to wit he make pretence,
Let him but once philosopher commence,
And, though he learning ne'er so warmly love,
He, like the rest, a very fool shall prove.
Friar, or monk, or canon, great, or small,
One sure and common ruin waits them all.

Now should I tell you, sirs, what virtues rare,
E'en the pure forms of limpid waters share ;
Alexipharmic some, some cooling deem'd,
Others for powers carminative esteem'd ;
Spirituos some, and potent to controul
E'en the warm functions of the active soul ;
These, form'd the nerves' fine energies to steep
In the soft fetters of unconscious sleep :
Others, again, to rouse the torpid blood,
And with new warmth bid flow the purple flood.
Why should I add to these the nicer toils,
When from soft plants we press essential oils ?
Fatigued, I'm sure, already is each ear,
Nor shall ye more of such strange jargon hear.

But I can ne'er, alas ! too oft repeat,
What a vile quack'ry, what a shameless cheat,
Is this same stone, the grand elixir nam'd,
Falsely the source of certain wealth proclaim'd ;

For,

For, as I've told you, toil we ne'er so hard,
Still, still, we ever miss our hop'd reward.
Yet is the specious dream so deep impress'd,
'That when they're most reduc'd, when most distress'd,
The dupes, to hope's false flattering gleams a prey, }
Still think deluded that some happier day, }
Will all their fears and all their cares repay. }
And, sad to say, though 'mong the wealthy bred,
So far is now the rank infection spread,
'That the poor wretch, who on a flock-bed lies,
Whose until'd roof scarce hides him from the skies,
Whose thread-bare coat scarce his chill'd limbs de-
fends,

When from the sky the pelting storm descends,
Sells his last rag, and, warm with faith alone,
Shivering and shirtless hopes the promis'd stone.

Well may, my friends, your conscious noses tell
This craft's sublime professors by their smell ;
In fumes of brimstone steep'd, a mile around
Their warm and fragrant odours may be found ;
And 'tis by this indeed, and by their clothes,
That, who they are, each passing school-boy knows.
But, if e'er ask'd, why they so mean appear,
Straight with low voice, close breathing in your ear,
'Tis

'Tis thus, they say, they hope their powers to
hide,

Which may not safely to themselves be spied.

But to proceed—While that our earthen pot,
Plac'd o'er a gentle fire, was waxing hot,
The metals all himself our master mix'd,
And to each mass its due proportion fix'd:
And, as he's gone, I boldly now will tell,
What, by experience taught, I know too well;
That though wide round loud fame his powers report,
He of his art's perfection falls full short.
Oft the pot breaks, and on the floor is spilt
Each precious drop, on which our hopes are built;
For, when th' imprison'd fumes with heat expand,
Our walls, too weak their fury to withstand,
Burst with loud crack, releas'd the vapours rise,
And to the roof the lighter substance flies;
While fus'd the coarse and denser dregs below
In whitening streams along the pavement flow.
But, when affairs go thus, the Devil, I ween,
Stands at our elbows, though by us unseen.

When now our shiver'd pot in pieces flies,
Each at the other staring with wild eyes,
In solemn silence marks his first surprise.

}
But

But silence soon to harsh reproach gives way,
Each on the other strives the blame to lay;
Now 'tis on him, who made the fire, bestow'd;
Now 'tis to him transferr'd, the coals who blow'd;
(That lot, alas! was mine) a third declares,
The mass ill-temper'd, hence our loss, he swears:
Mark well my words, a fourth says, I beseech,
This was the cause, the fire was made of beech.
Our master saw the fault was past repair,
And henceforth firm resolv'd to take more care;
But to his men, to end the broil, thus spoke:
"Ere we began," he says, "the pot was broke.
"Ne'er be cast down, but greater caution use,
"When for our work you next the vessels choose.
"Be it your present care the floor to sweep,
"Then pick the larger fragments from the heap;
"Let the small remnant through a sieve be pass'd,
"Thus from the wreck shall some be sav'd at last."
"Ay," one replies, more sanguine than the rest,
"The life of man's a lottery at best.
"Thwarted, 'tis true, at present are our pains,
"Yet we see something from our loss remains.
"But who's so bold to hope, that fair success,
"Uncheck'd, unvaried, will his labours bless?

"Now

"Now clouds the sky deform, anon appears

"The glorious sun, and soon the prospect cheers :

"The merchant's hope oft raging tempests sweep

"To the dark chambers of the foaming deep :

"But oftener far smooth seas and gentler gales

"Waft to their destin'd port the swelling sails."

"Next time," our master says, "we sure shall
speed ;

"I'll take all blame, if then we don't succeed.

"To me our failure's self is proof most strong,

"That something, heaven knows what, must have
been wrong."

And thus it ever is ; though when we're met,

And round in deep debate are gravely set,

We preach so wisely on our favourite theme,

You'd each at least a Solomon esteem ;

Though we're too apt this truth in scorn to hold,

That all that gaily glisters is not gold ;

Nor hath less oft mature experience found,

The fruit that fairest seem'd the most unsound :

Thus, if us sons of science ye would prove,

'Tis fit our varnish'd masks ye first remove ;

Then fair before your eyes would stand confess'd

A train of empty senseless knaves at best.

That

That this no slander is, will plain appear,
When ye the substance of my tale shall hear.

First of our troop this reverend Canon stood,
Keen too he was, and every thing but good;
For, truth to say, upon all England's ground
A villain more complete could not be found:
So fine 's his art, that none his snares suspect;
His guile, like secret poisons, might infect
E'en a whole region round, and soon destroy,
By more than Grecian fraud, a second Troy.
Yet faithless, like himself, hath lying fame
Fill'd the deluded country with his name.
But let not what I say offend your ear,
Ye who by chance are of his order here:
By censures harsh I mean not all to wrong;
Some worthless brethren, well I know, belong
To every rank alike; the holy band,
By Christ ordain'd to spread through every land
God's grace to man, one traitor base contain'd,
Yet by his guilt were ne'er the Apostles stain'd.
So if your convent some vile priest disgrace,
Safely and soon the stain ye may efface;
Quick from the rest th' infected limb remove,
And clear to all your purer soundness prove.

In

In days of yore a priest in London liv'd,
And well by all belov'd he there had thriv'd;
So high at length in favour he was grown,
His hostess bade him think her house his own:
All bounteous she, not clothes alone and board,
But cash, whene'er he wanted, would afford.
While at the lodgings of his generous dame,
To him one day a knavish canon came,
"Lend me, good friend, one single mark," he said,
"And in three days at most it shall be paid."
Alert the friendly priest the favour grants,
And counts, without delay, the cash he wants;
Which kept two days, right faithful to his word,
Again the canon brings it on the third.
The priest, of manners soft, and generous mind,
(Well pleas'd withal his cash return'd to find)
Thus kindly speaks: "Indeed, my worthy friend,
"'Tis with true heart-felt joy that aid I lend
"To those, like thee, who plighted faith observe,
"And ne'er from what they promise, basely swerve;
"Gladly with thee again I'll share my store,
"And, did thy need require, would lend thee
more."

"Favours

"Favours like thine," he says, "so prompt and kind,

"Stamp with impressions deep my grateful mind ;

"And 'tis with joy sincere and warm delight,

"I feel my power thy friendship to requite :

"Lo ! then, 'tis mine successful to explore

"The hidden depths of philosophic lore ;

"And I'll impart to thee, if such thy will,

"Each latent mystery, and all my skill."

Whate'er he said, the easy priest believ'd,

And with fresh joy the proffer'd boon receiv'd.

This canon, gentle sirs, if right I ween,

Ye've all suppos'd my master to have been :

That he by chance was not, though all agree,

Mine's, to the full, as great a rogue as he ;

And, truth to say, such knavish tricks I've known,

That such a master I've oft blush'd to own ;

And blush I fain would now, but every rose

Must leave his cheeks, who coals and cinders blows.

But to the canon now once more attend :

"First," to the priest he says, "your servant send,

"Of quicksilver three ounces to procure,

"From which pure metal I'll in change ensure."

The quicksilver procur'd, his work to aid
He next requests that near him coals be laid ;
Then from his bosom a crosslette he took,
And staring solemn with mysterious look,
" Take this," he cries, " and put thyself therein
" One ounce of quicksilver, and here begin
" Of deep philosophy thy grand career ;
" Soon thou in science shalt have no compeer.
" From every eye my art's deep craft I hide ;
" To thee, whose love hath been so nobly tried ;
" To thee alone its secrets I confide. }
" Soon from this quicksilver thy wond'ring eyes
" Shall see a metal pure and perfect rise :
" Wrought by this powder is the mighty change,
" Endued with powers occult, and passing strange.
" But to thyself alone I must impart
" The sacred secrets of the wondrous art :
" First then the servant thou must send away,
" Ere the mysterious process I display."

The man retir'd, he bids the priest with care
For the new duties of his post prepare :
Coals first he tells him round the pan to heap,
Steady and equal next the heat to keep ;

Then,

Then, on his docile pupil to impose,
He in the pan his boasted powder throws :
This, chalk or dust, was useless but to blind
With shew of mystery th' observer's mind.
" Soon," says the canon, " will our work succeed,
" And thine own hands," he cries, " shall do the
deed."

Pleas'd with these words, the priest the fire renews,
And with fresh zeal his heating toils pursues.

" Let me awhile thy task severe relieve ;
" To see thee sweat so sore, I truly grieve ;
" Here take this handkerchief," the canon said,
" And wipe thy face, and dry thy reeking head."
This while he did, long in his hood conceal'd,
Sly in his hand a coal the canon held ;
In it, before he came, a hole was drill'd,
And the void space an ounce of silver fill'd.
This done, with wax he well the hole secur'd,
And thus to his base plot success insur'd.

Now, while the other wip'd his dewy face,
He watch'd the favouring moment, right to place
This coal among the rest, then hard he blew,
And the rais'd sparks high to the ceiling flew.

Then in the pan, with semblance dark, he peeps,
Then round the edge anew the coals he heaps ;
“ Now let some drink,” he says, “ our toils requite,
“ And set thy heart at rest, for all goes right.”
Ere long the flames had reach'd the canon's coal,
The soften'd wax soon melted from the hole ;
Then unconfin'd the silver trickling ran
In a pure shining stream within the pan.

When this the canon saw, he quickly cries,
“ Now, good fir priest, prepare to feast your eyes !
“ But you must first a lump of chalk prepare,
“ Which smooth and nicely cut, and scoop'd with care,
“ Must better tools supply ; for much I fear,
“ No proper mould for ingots can be here.
“ But, that thyself may the whole process see,
“ And of each step minute a witness be,
“ I'll with thee go ; the fire may safely burn,
“ If but the door be lock'd, till our return.”

Soon, for his purpose fit, he found some chalk,
And while he held the priest in earnest talk,
Forth from his sleeve, but well conceal'd from view,
A wedge of silver the sly canon drew ;
Its weight an ounce : by this the chalk he cut,
Then in his sleeve again the wedge he put.

Now

Now from the pan he takes the melted ore,
 Into his mould of chalk, while warm, to pour ;
 Then he in water steeps it, and commands
 The priest to take it thence with eager hands :
 The priest obey'd—'twas then his sparkling eyes
 Gleam'd with gay rapture, mix'd with sweet surprise :
 " O ! could'st thou teach me, friend, to work like
 thee !

" To my last hour," he says, " thy slave I'd be."

" Once more our work," he answers, " we'll repeat,

" Then an adept thyself will be complete."

The priest his toil renews, the fire he blows,
 And round the pan, as erst, fresh coals he throws :
 Meantime the crafty canon in his hand
 Holds, as by chance, a small and hollow wand ;
 This wand an ounce of silver dust contain'd,
 Which, clos'd with wax, safe in the tube remain'd,
 Till, with pretence to aid his busy friend,
 And, as he said, the drooping fire to mend,
 With the stick's point he slyly stirs each coal,
 Till the bright ore all trickled from the hole.

What could the priest, but deep his skill confess,
 When twice confirm'd he sees their wish'd success ?

Almost his sage instructor he adores,
And more importunate again implores,
That he would now his wondrous art unfold,
Nor the great secret longer would withhold.

“Not yet,” the canon cried; “one trial more
“Shall to thee prove; I’ve treasures yet in store.

“Some copper bring.” The ready priest obeys,
Nor long, impatient grown, in search he stays.
That brought, one ounce exact the canon weighs. }

Then the old process he again repeats,
And a third time his blinded pupil cheats.

“Now mind thy task,” he says, “and, stooping low,
“Be sure with quicker breath the coals to blow.”

The copper, soften’d now and ductile grown,
Which had already in the pan been thrown,
Into the mould of chalk, unseen, he cast,

Then cried, “Now cease to blow, ’tis done at last.”

Quick in the water the hot mould he dipp’d,
And, at that moment, from his sleeve he slipp’d
The silver wedge, which in the mould he plac’d,
And in its stead the copper seiz’d in haste.

“Now, brother priest, the water search,” he said,

“And see if aught our labours hath repaid.”

Pleas’d

Pleas'd he obey'd his honour'd lord's command,
And grasp'd the silver wedge with eager hand.

"Now," says the canon, "fair before your eyes
Some skilful goldsmith shall assay our prize."

Then to a shop they the three wedges bear,
And having each well tried, and prov'd with care,
The workmen pure and good them all declare. }

Not gayer hails the lark the opening day,
Nor the sweet nightingale the breath of May;
Not livelier transports conscious beauties feel,
When at their feet imploring lovers kneel;
Nor keener pants a generous knight for arms,
To prove him worthy of his mistress' charms,
Than did the priest, impatient to obtain
The promis'd means such secret wealth to gain.

"Tell me what sum, dear, best of friends!" he
cries,

"To buy the wondrous secret may suffice."

"Dear," says the canon, "is the price, I own; }

"Yet through the realm to but one friar alone,

"Myself except, is the deep secret known."

"Be it but mine," he says, "is all I pray,

"Then instant name the price without delay."

"Not less than fifty pounds," was his reply,
"E'en for a friend the costly prize may buy :
"But much I'd do for honour'd friendship's sake ;
"Therefore from thee I'll only forty take."

The priest the money gives ; and ere he goes,
The canon strict enjoins, he'd ne'er disclose,
From whom the art he learn'd, to mortal ear,
If aught the safety of a friend were dear.

This promise made, his leave the canon takes,
And from that day the bubbled priest forsakes ;
Who soon, alas ! too clearly to his cost,
(First having cash and time and labour lost)
Found, after many a sad and sore defeat,
His friend a sharper, and his art a cheat.

O potent gold ! whose stern resistless sway
Men of all climes and every age obey !
Thee to increase each eager mind employs,
But oft its object the warm wish destroys ;
For since this vile philosophy was known,
Gold scarcer now than e'er before is grown.
Yet they who still the fleeting hope pursue,
Who still, though foil'd so oft, the chace renew,
Burnt though before, will not of fire beware,
But rush determin'd on the specious snare.

These

* These questions, so historians grave attest,
 To Plato once a curious youth address'd :
 " Tell me, great master, by what name is known
 " Nature's grand boast, this wonder-working stone ?"
 " First take the stone that Titanos men name."
 " What stone is that ?" " Magnetia is the same."
 " Ay," says the youth, " good master, is it thus ?
 " This is *ignotum per ignotius*.
 " But what's Magnetia ?" " 'Tis a water made
 " Of the four elements." " Great sir," he said,
 " How to combine their properties explain."
 " Youth," he replied, " thy eager hopes are vain :
 " Each sage, to whom was known the art profound,
 " Hath Heaven's severe decrees to silence bound ;
 " Nor less enjoin'd, that no presumptuous pen
 " Reveal the secret to the eyes of men !"

* The book alluded to (" Book senior" in the original) is printed in the *Theatrum Chemicum*, vol. v. p. 219. under this title—*Senioris Zadith fil. Hamuelis Tabula Chymica*. The story which follows of Plato and his disciple is there told (p. 249), with some variations, of Salomon. " *Dixit Salomon rex, Recipe lapidem qui dicitur Thitaris—Dixit sapiens, Assigna mihi illum. Dixit, est corpus magnesiæ—Dixit, quid est magnesia ? Respondit, magnesia est aqua, composita, &c.*"

TYRWHITT, v. 16918.

May

May all henceforth the vain pursuit give o'er,
Nor longer strive God's secrets to explore !
Creature of dust, shall weak and mortal man
The counsels of th' Almighty dare to scan ?
Science' fair lamp to all his wants benign
Deigns with soft lustre on his paths to shine ;
But weak no less than impious is the pride,
That rashly hopes to pierce, what Heaven would hide.
Now, sirs, farewell ; may each his ways amend !
At length my tedious story's at an end.

PROLOGUE

TO

THE MANCIPLE'S TALE.

WHAT man of Kent, but knows a little town,
Call'd by this title quaint, Bob-up-and-down ?
This we had reach'd, when now our Host espied
Loose in his saddle's seat the Cook to ride.

"From ill, good Cook," he says, "may Heaven thee
keep !

"But, by my troth, thou'rt drunk, and fast asleep.

"That thou hast vigils kept, I see full clear,

"But not in prayers hast spent the night, I fear.

"Come forth, good master Cook, thy feathers shake,

"And tell thy tale to keep thyself awake !"

Crop-sick and pale, "I grieve," the Cook replied,

"That your commands, fir Host, should be denied :

"And why I know not, but I'd rather sleep,

"Than drink a gallon of the best in Chepe."

"A tale, good Host," the Manciple replied,

"We can't expect from one, who scarce can ride :

"But,

“ But, if it please this gallant company,
“ I will the place of master Cook supply.
“ O sorry sot !” then to the Cook he cries,
“ How stupid roll thy glassy goggling eyes !
“ Shame ! so to love a noisy drunken feast,
“ Till from a man thou’rt sunk beneath a beast !”

The Cook, not senseless quite to such disgrace,
Indignant stares full in his censor’s face ;
And piqu’d, in public thus to be reprov’d,
His head he nodded, and his lips he mov’d,
And something mutter’d, what, no mortal heard,
For speak he could not now one single word.

But him full dear his angry effort cost ;
For, spent with rage, he quite his balance lost,
And down he fell, and there till now had laid,
Had not good friends come timely to his aid.
Then many a hardy tug was spent in vain,
Ere they could right him on his horse again.
Better ’twere far for cooks to stay at home,
Than out on idle pilgrimages roam :

Better it such becomes to wield their ladle,
Than risk their necks by mounting on a saddle.

Then thus our Host the Manciple address’d :
“ That he’s past tale-telling must be confess’d ;

“ But

"But think'st thou not, thou'rt somewhat too severe,

"To chide his frailty thus in public here?"

"I've known some manciples, not over nice,

"Who in their bills o'ercharg'd the market price.

"Who on some future day can tell, but he

"May some such naughty tale retort on thee?"

"Faith," said the Manciple, "your hint is just,

"And soothe his anger, by some means, I must;

"And I have here the means at hand, I trust."

Then tow'rs the Cook he went, and in his view

Forth from his pocket he a bottle drew:

"Come, Cook," he says, "this will set all things right,

"And firm our friendship, as before, unite."

The Cook, who grinn'd consent, but nought replied,

Felt in an instant all his rage subside;

Express'd forgiveness, with a soften'd look,

And cheerful in his hands the bottle took;

Nor with faint zeal the beverage bland he sips,

But copious draughts he takes, and smacks his lips.

"Here," said our Host, "we see what powers di-
vine

"Heaven's gracious boon hath given to potent wine;

"Med'cine supreme! ordain'd each wound to heal,

"With soft oblivion o'er each grief to steal:

"Form'd

" Form'd the dark gloom of envy to assuage,
 " Or calm the furious bursts of vengeful rage !
 " What thanks to thee, great Bacchus, mortals owe !
 " Source of each joy, and balm of ev'ry woe !
 " But 'tis to thee, good Manciple, we look,
 " To fill the post, resign'd by master Cook."

THE

MANCIPLE'S TALE.

OF yore Dan Phœbus liv'd on earth below,
 Fam'd for his skill to stretch the sounding bow;
 Sure to its point th' unerring shaft he drew,
 And the fierce serpent deadly Python flew;
 And hence, in honour of the hardy deed,
 The bow e'en now he bears, fair conquest's meed.

Yet not renown'd for archery alone,
 Each softer science was alike his own;
 To him sweet music's magic powers belong,
 Father of heavenly harmony and song!
 Nature's choice gifts he, these besides, possess'd,
 The fairest, comeliest youth by all confess'd:
 Gentle in manners, graceful in his mien,
 Wide round the world his equal ne'er was seen.

Long while, immur'd within a splendid cage,
 Did a fam'd crow his vacant hours engage;
 Him soon he taught to catch each note he heard;
 He nicely mimick'd each harmonious bird.

Of

Oft he provok'd, beneath the neighbouring grove,
The tender Philomel to own her love :
So true he fung, e'en her his notes deceiv'd,
And her fond partner him she oft believ'd :
Nor sylvan songs alone his voice could reach,
But all the various forms of human speech.

A wife young Phœbus had, he dearly lov'd,
And one, whom early choice had long approv'd :
Yet, though complete he every wish possess'd,
Still rankling jealousy disturb'd his breast.
Deep in his soul was fix'd a mortal dread
Of the fair shoots, that branch on many a head :
Strictly he hence forbade, she e'er should roam,
And thought no dangers could arise at home.
But, ah ! how vain ! a pure and spotless soul
Needs not unjust suspicion's harsh controul ;
And the gay wife, who rolls the melting eye,
E'en bars, and bolts, and padlocks may defy.

Phœbus now practis'd each endearing art,
And studious play'd the tenderest lover's part ;
And hop'd, by gilding bright her hated chain,
Th' unrivall'd master of her heart to reign.
But vain is force or fondness to controul
The sovereign favourite bent, that rules the soul.

Take

Take e'en the gayest songster of the grove,
 And practise every art to win his love;
 If once a cage his roving flight confine,
 Fill'd though with plenty, though with gold it shine,
 Still for his native wilds he will repine :
 Or take a cat, and foster her with milk
 And tenderest meats, and make her couch of silk,
 And let her see a mouse pop by the wall,
 Couch she forgets, and milk, and meats, and all,
 And every dainty of the lordliest house
 She leaves untouch'd, unheeded, for a mouse.

Thus on his wife, accusom'd long to rove,
 No change could Phœbus work with all his love :
 Long had she had unknown a favourite swain,
 Uncouth in manners, and in person plain :
 Wonder thou would'st, did once thou Phœbus see,
 How much unlike in every point was he ;
 Hyperion to a Satyr, when compar'd ;
 Yet he her soul's affections more than shar'd.

Phœbus one day from home on business went,
 When pleas'd she instant for her Lemman sent.
 Harsh is the term, and a fastidious ear
 May think perhaps th' expression too severe :

But truth's strict mandates varnish'd words disdain,
 Pure are her motives, and her language plain.
 Wise Plato saith (as he, who lists, may read)
 "The word should ever well besit the deed."
 If to your senses aught I aim to bring,
 I or must clear describe, or name the thing.
 To me what boots it, who plain truth revere,
 Whether my words to some too home appear?
 Whoredom is sinful, and is still the same,
 Whoe'er the sinner, and how great her name.
 When in mean life a poor defenceless maid
 Falls, by a practis'd villain's art betray'd,
 Driven from the shelter of her native home,
 Forc'd for precarious sustenance to roam,
 Not one kind friend can the sad victim find,
 By all to hopeless infamy consign'd.
 But when unfaithful proves a courtly dame,
 Instant her crime assumes a gentler name;
 'Tis soft attachment, and a venial flame.

}

But to my tale—Their guilt to all unknown,
 The lovers hop'd and thought themselves alone;
 While from his cage, suspended high, the bird
 Each guilty sigh and every whisper heard.

Nought

Nought then he said, though shame his bosom burn'd;
But when his honour'd master home return'd,
With generous rage he stretch'd his swelling throat,
And cuckoo, cuckoo, was his only note.
Whence this new song? his master soon enquir'd,
And heard in answer more than he desir'd;
Nought, like a faithful friend, the crow conceal'd,
But all he heard, and all he saw reveal'd.

Phœbus to floods of ceaseless tears gives way,
To sorrow's sharpest pangs the mournful prey;
But vengeful rage to sorrow soon succeeds;
His bow he bends, and the adulteress bleeds.
Vengeance now sated, all his love returns,
Again his heart with wonted fondness burns;
But her, whose charms his every thought engage,
Lifeless he views, the victim of his rage.
Now direr sorrow all his soul possess'd,
And chas'd each ray of comfort from his breast:
Whate'er before could soft delight bestow,
Now shades with deeper gloom his hopeless woe;
His lyre, his lute, each instrument of joy,
E'en his fam'd bow his frantic hands destroy;
And last, sad tale, dragg'd fiercely from his cage,
Thus on his long lov'd bird he vents his rage.

“ O! traitor

" O ! traitor vile ! the cause of all my grief,
 " Woes beyond hope, and sorrows past relief !
 " O ! monster ! thus thy master to deceive !
 " O ! fool ! a tale so groundless to believe !
 " O ! wife ! most justly to my soul so dear !
 " How dost thou now all wan and pale appear !
 " Dark are those eyes, that fill'd my heart with glee,
 " Of sense bereft, and, ah ! bereft by me !
 " But thee, vile scorpion ! just rewards await ;
 " Hear then thy fix'd, irrevocable fate.
 " Henceforth no more shall thy melodious voice
 " The listening tenants of the woods rejoice ;
 " Rival no more of the sweet bird of night,
 " Shall thy soft songs the melting groves delight ;
 " But, presage dire of tempest and of rain,
 " With harsh discordant croak shalt thou complain.
 " Thy plumes, whose whiteness sham'd the driven
 snow,
 " Henceforth shall all their envied charms forego,
 " Dark as thy soul, and mournful as my woe." }
 He spake, and instant midnight's pitchy gloom
 Spread its dark mantle o'er each milky plume ;
 And, by relentless Phœbus' anger stain'd,
 The race of crows have black e'er since remain'd.

Take

Take heed, by this example, all, I pray,
Of whom ye chance to speak, and what ye say:
Nor ever tell a friend through all your life,
Though some kind neighbour should admire his wife.
Trust me, your forward zeal will sure offend,
And all your friendship will in hatred end :
For thus saith Solomon, " Thy lips restrain,
" Rash words thou oft may'st with recall'd in vain."
Oft on my youthful mind my ancient dame
In many a lecture grave impress'd the same ;
" Nature," she said, " with mark'd and special care,
" How we speak rashly, hath bid all beware.
" The tongue, that slender instrument of sound,
" She with a wall of teeth hath fenc'd around.
" O ! who may tell what deeds of mortal woe,
" From loose, unguarded speech each moment flow ?
" Keep well thy tongue," she said, " its zeal restrain,
" Or as a sword 'twill friendship cut in twain :
" Think what dire ills from thoughtless words ensue,
" Nor tales unpleasing bring, or false or true :
" Where'er thy lot, whether 'mong high or low,
" Keep well thy tongue, and think upon the crow."

THE END.

